

"Example of
how wonderfully
weird the Marvel
Universe is."
— APT

EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES

THE

AVENGERS



AARON
GARRÓN
FIORELLI
CURIEL

MARVEL

HISTORY'S MIGHTIEST HEROES

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THE AVENGERS



HISTORY'S
MIGHTIEST HEROES



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EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES **THE AVENGERS** HISTORY'S MIGHTIEST HEROES

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AVENGERS CREATED BY **STAN LEE** & **JACK KIRBY**

AND THERE CAME A DAY, A DAY UNLIKE ANY OTHER,
WHEN EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES FOUND THEMSELVES
UNITED AGAINST A COMMON THREAT! ON THAT DAY,
THE AVENGERS WERE BORN--TO FIGHT THE FOES
NO SINGLE SUPER HERO COULD WITHSTAND!

THE DEMON MEPHISTO HAS BEEN BEDEVILING THE
AVENGERS ACROSS ALL OF TIME AND THE MULTIVERSE.
MEPHISTO HAS ALSO FORMED HIS OWN VAST COUNCIL OF
RED, MADE UP OF VARIANT VERSIONS OF HIMSELF,
TO FURTHER HIS FIENDISH PLANS.

57 HISTORY'S MIGHTIEST HEROES PART ONE
"SOLDIER SUPREME: STALKED BY THE SOUL SNIPER"

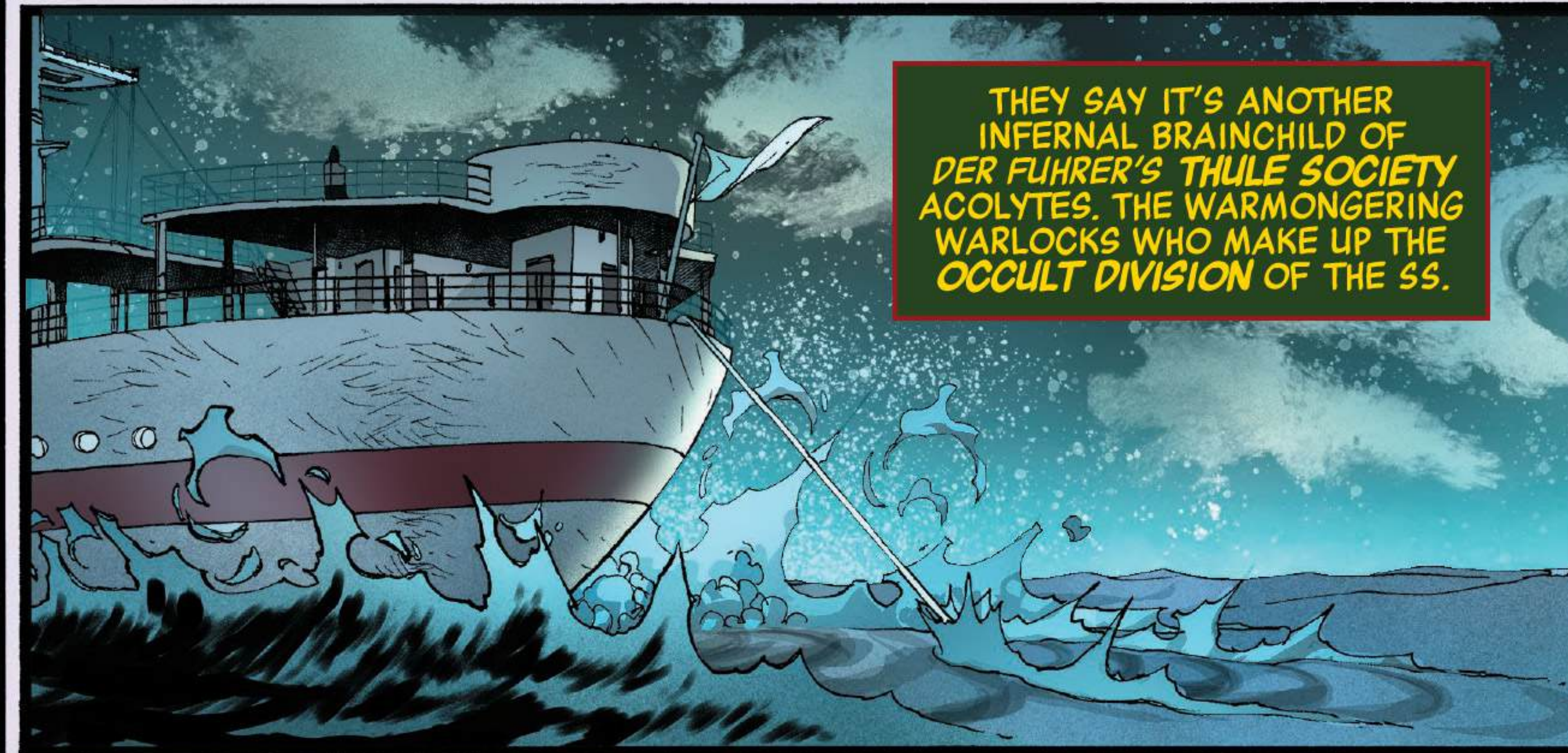


1943.

IN THE *NECRO-BAZAARS* OF ALGIERS, WORD IS THAT HITLER HAS HIMSELF A NEW *SECRET WEAPON*.

AND IT'S NOT THE KIND THAT COMES FROM A FACTORY. NOT FROM ANY FACTORY *ABOVEGROUND* AT LEAST.

THEY SAY IT'S ANOTHER INFERNAL BRAINCHILD OF DER FUHRER'S *THULE SOCIETY* ACOLYTES. THE WARMONGERING WARLOCKS WHO MAKE UP THE *OCCULT DIVISION* OF THE SS.



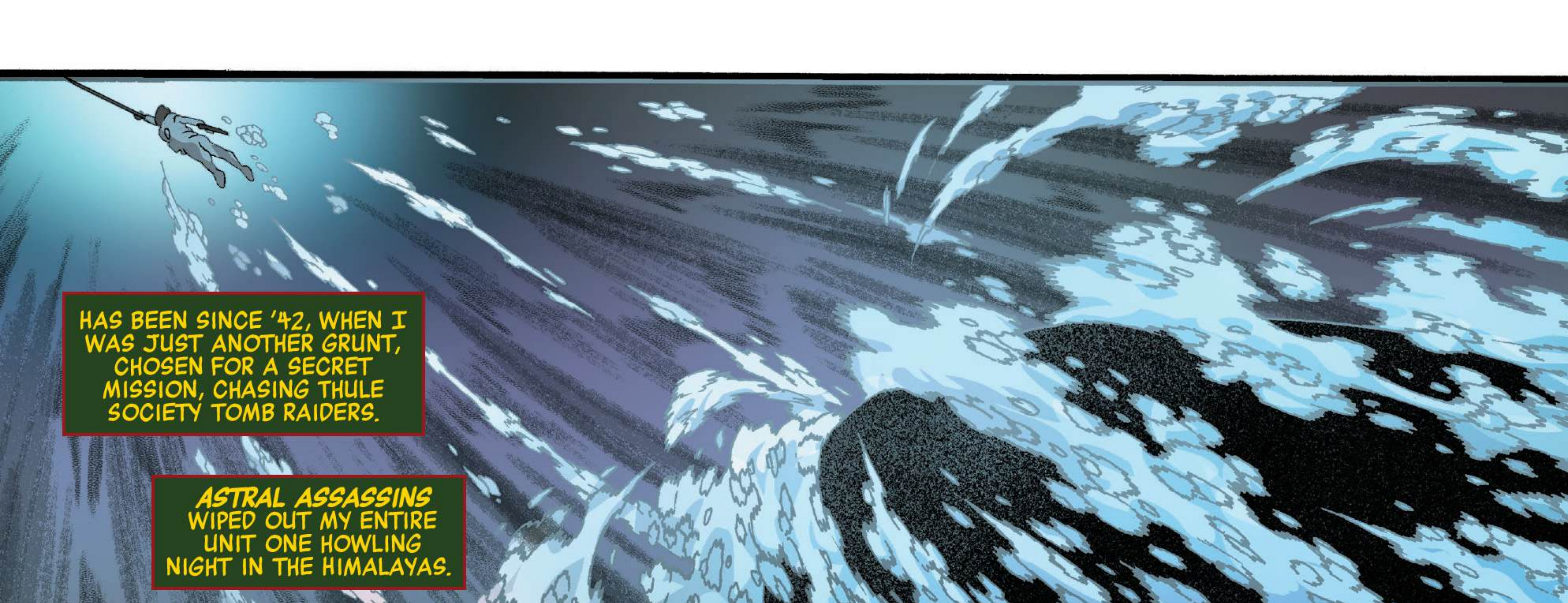
SO I HITCH A RIDE ON A HOSPITAL SHIP FILLED WITH *NUNS* AS IT'S CROSSING THE IRISH SEA.

FIGURE THAT'S SOME BAIT NO SELF-RESPECTING, *HELL-WORSHIPPING* NAZI COULD POSSIBLY RESIST.

BUT IF I'M BEING HONEST, I ALREADY KNOW...

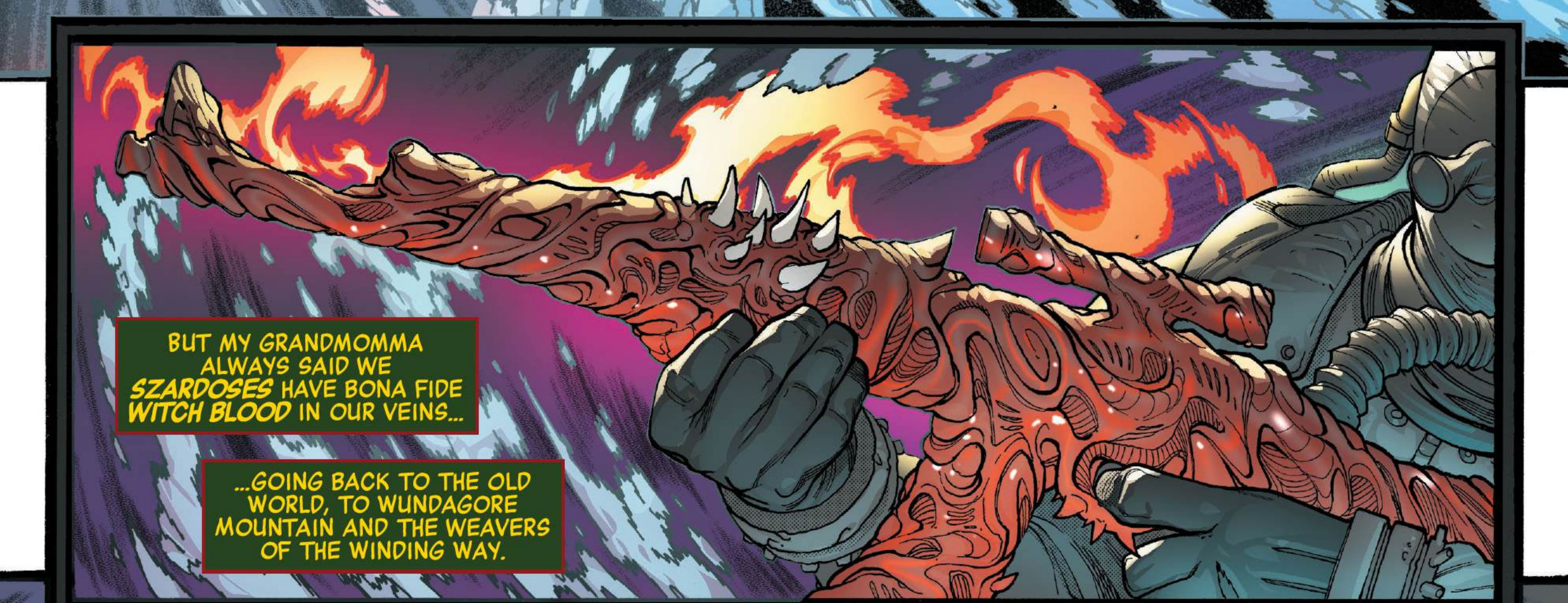
...THE REAL BAIT IS *YOURS TRULY*.





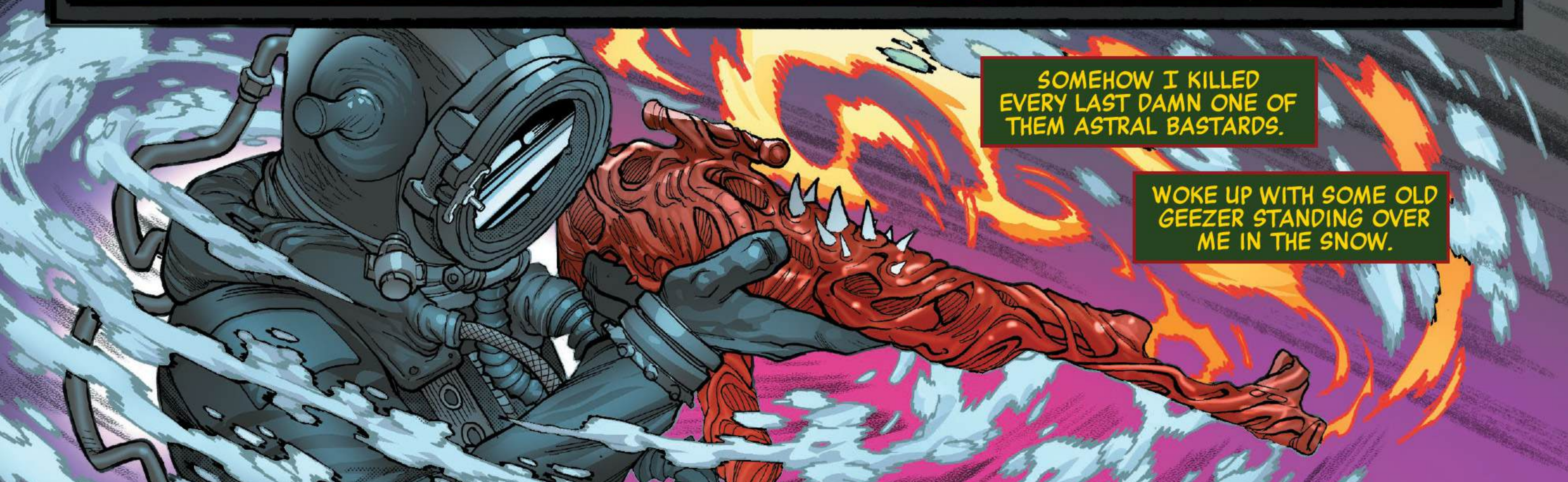
HAS BEEN SINCE '42, WHEN I
WAS JUST ANOTHER GRUNT,
CHOSEN FOR A SECRET
MISSION, CHASING THULE
SOCIETY TOMB RAIDERS.

ASTRAL ASSASSINS
WIPE OUT MY ENTIRE
UNIT ONE HOWLING
NIGHT IN THE HIMALAYAS.



BUT MY GRANDMOMMA
ALWAYS SAID WE
SZARDOSES HAVE BONA FIDE
WITCH BLOOD IN OUR VEINS...

...GOING BACK TO THE OLD
WORLD, TO WUNDAGORE
MOUNTAIN AND THE WEAVERS
OF THE WINDING WAY.



SOMEHOW I KILLED
EVERY LAST DAMN ONE OF
THEM ASTRAL BASTARDS.

WOKE UP WITH SOME OLD
GEEZER STANDING OVER
ME IN THE SNOW.



CALLED
HIMSELF THE
ANCIENT ONE.



THIS U-BOAT WAS
BUILT WITH CURSED
METALS AND
ENCHANTED
LEVIATHAN BONES.

IT RUNS WITHOUT
ANY SORT OF
HUMAN CREW.

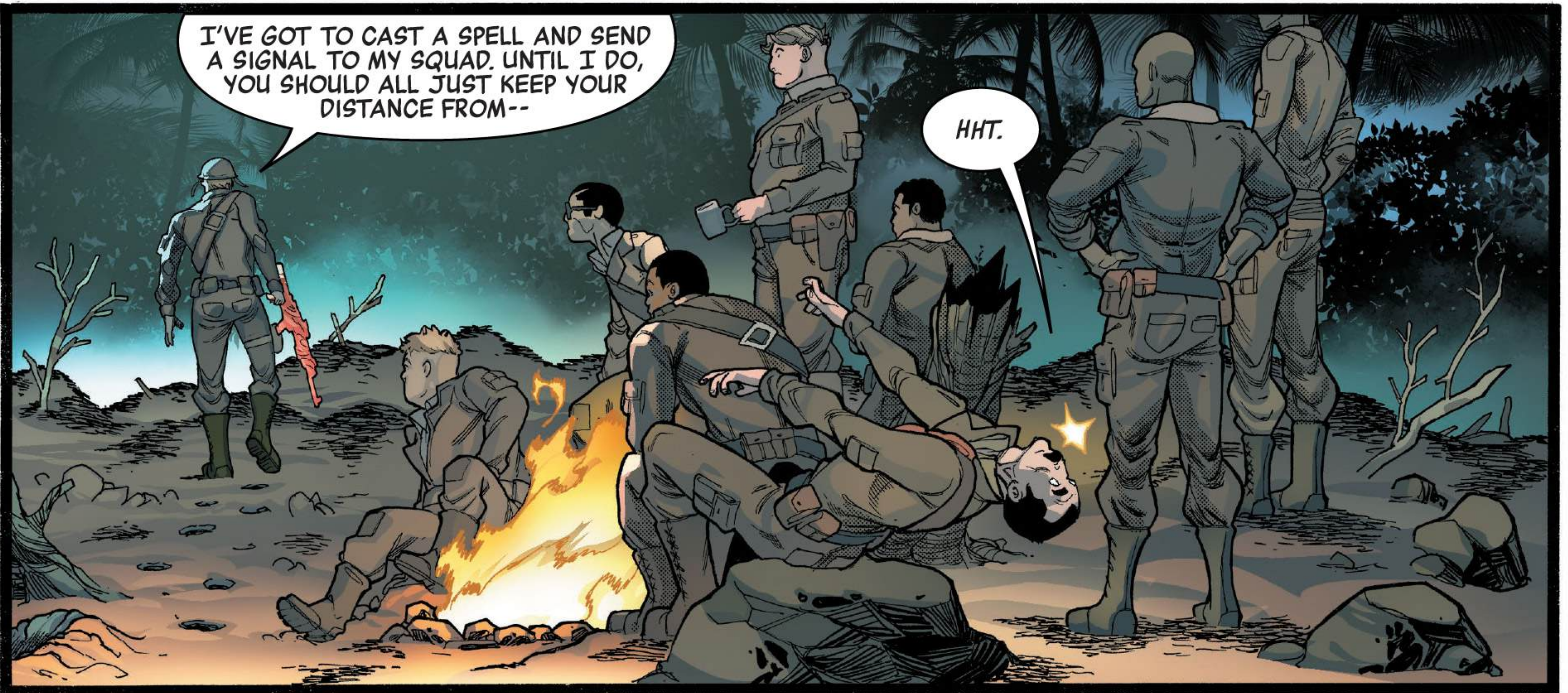
BECAUSE THE
WHOLE DAMN THING
IS POSSESSED.

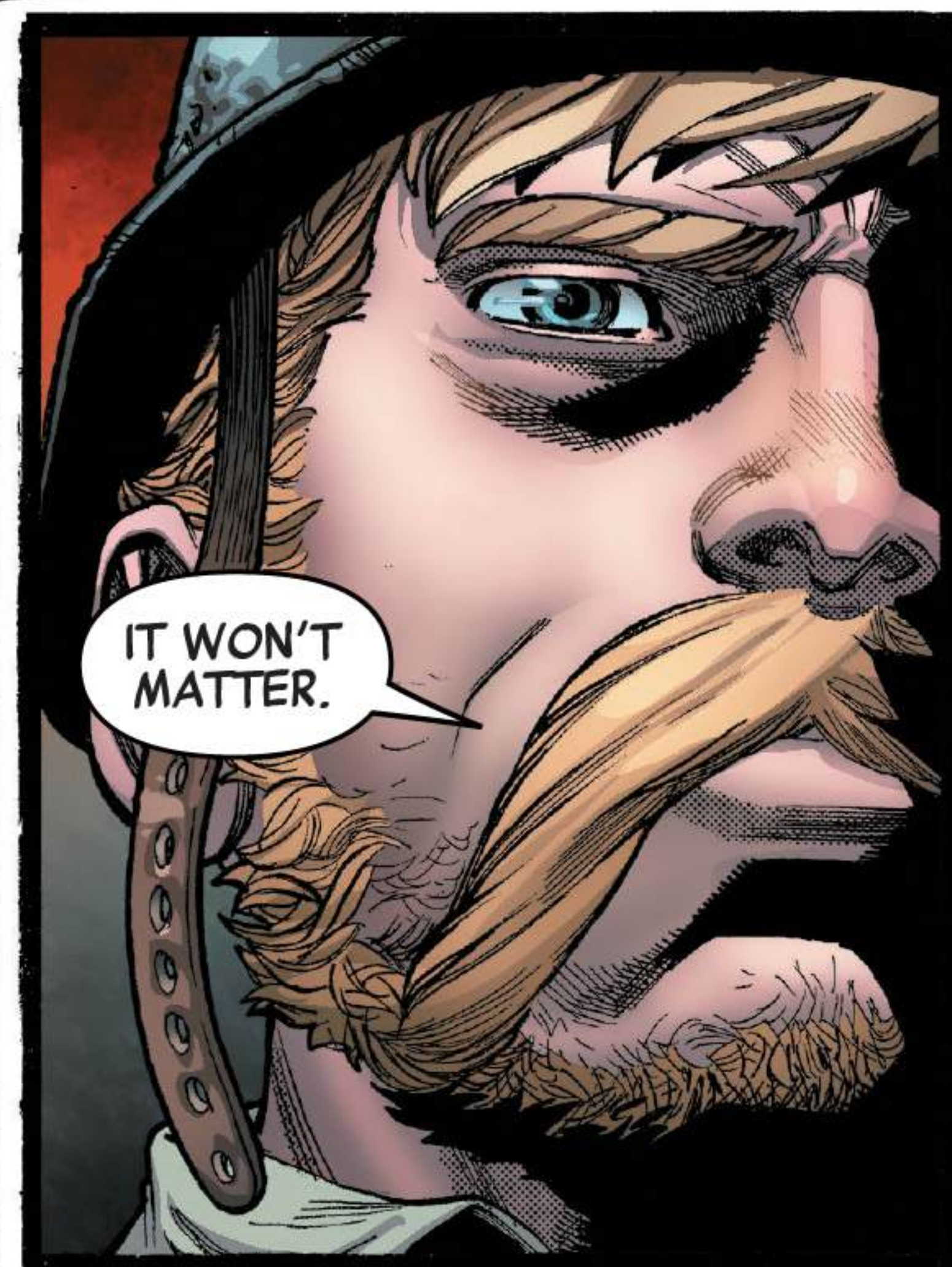
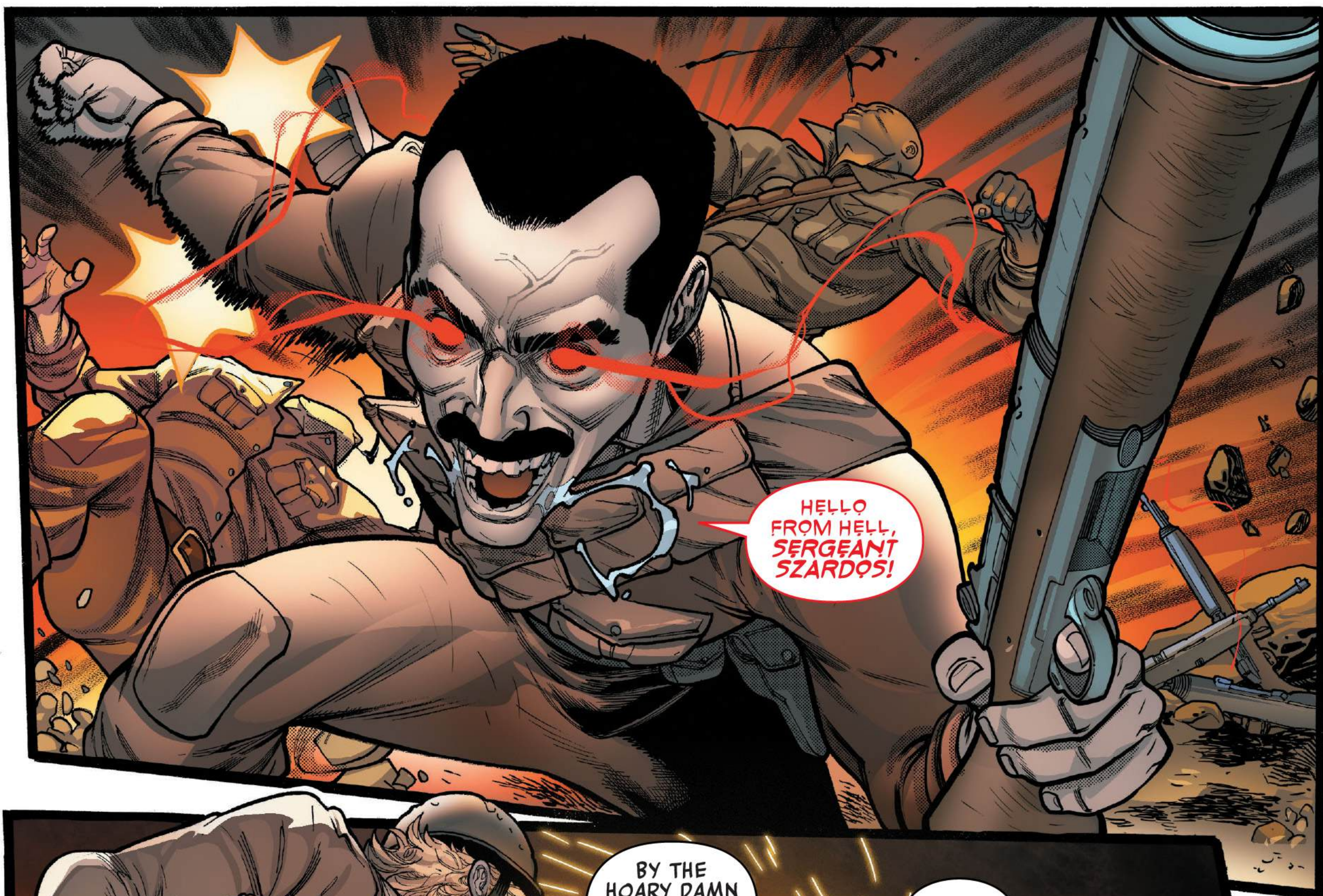
U-666,
THE DEVIL OF
THE DEEP.

CONSIDER THIS AN
EXORCISM AT FIVE
THOUSAND FATHOMS,
YOU BIG, UGLY
SONUVA SUCCUBUS.

ONE BREATHING
BULLET AT A TIME.









WHAT...
WHAT JUST
HAPPENED...?

PHIL, WHAT
THE HELL CAME
OVER YOU? YOU
WENT **CRAZY**
FOR A--



GAARGGH!

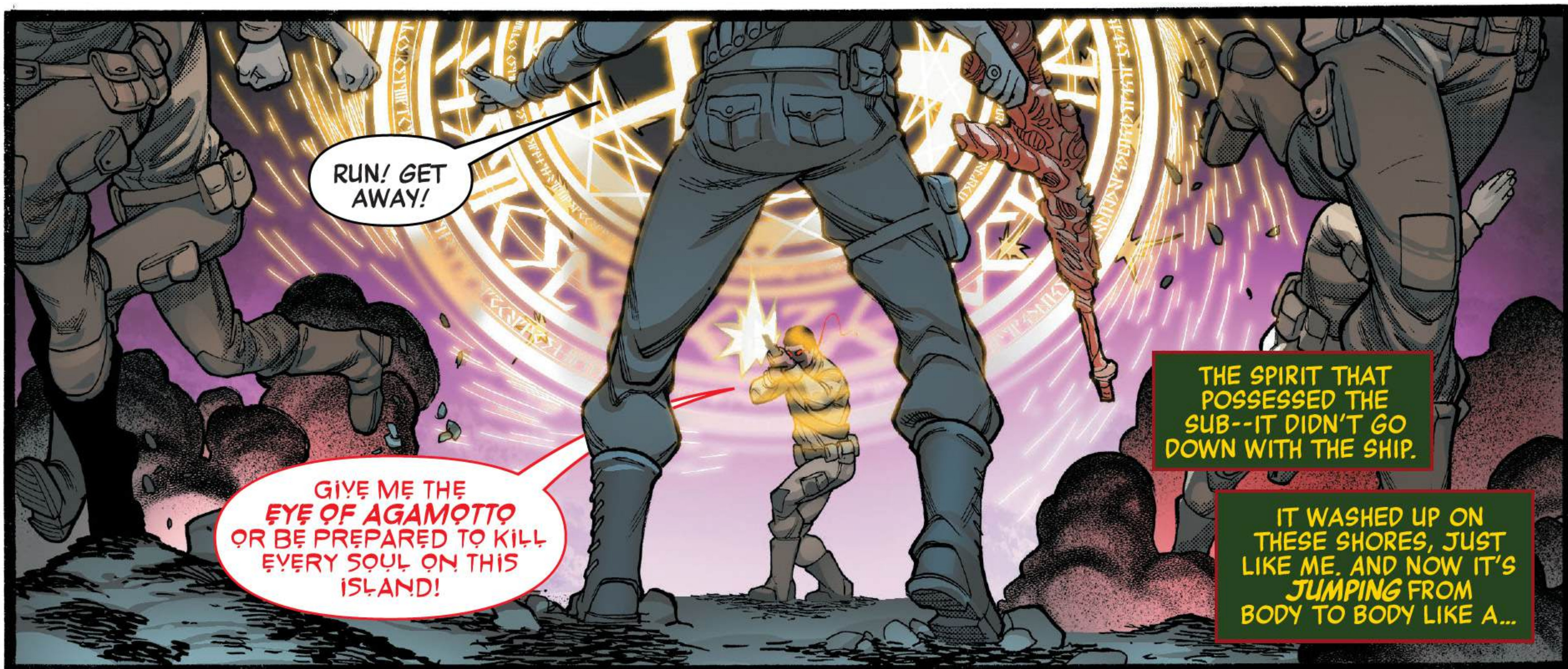
WHAT THE
F#\$@?!



STEVE,
GOD, WHAT ARE
YOU...?

IS YOUR
MISSION
BECOMING CLEAR
YET, SERGEANT?

DO YOU SEE
HOW ONLY **YOU**
CAN SAVE THE LIVES
OF THESE POOR
MEN?



RUN! GET
AWAY!

GIVE ME THE
EYE OF AGAMOTTO
OR BE PREPARED TO KILL
EVERY SOUL ON THIS
ISLAND!

THE SPIRIT THAT
POSSESSED THE
SUB--IT DIDN'T GO
DOWN WITH THE SHIP.

IT WASHED UP ON
THESE SHORES, JUST
LIKE ME. AND NOW IT'S
JUMPING FROM
BODY TO BODY LIKE A...

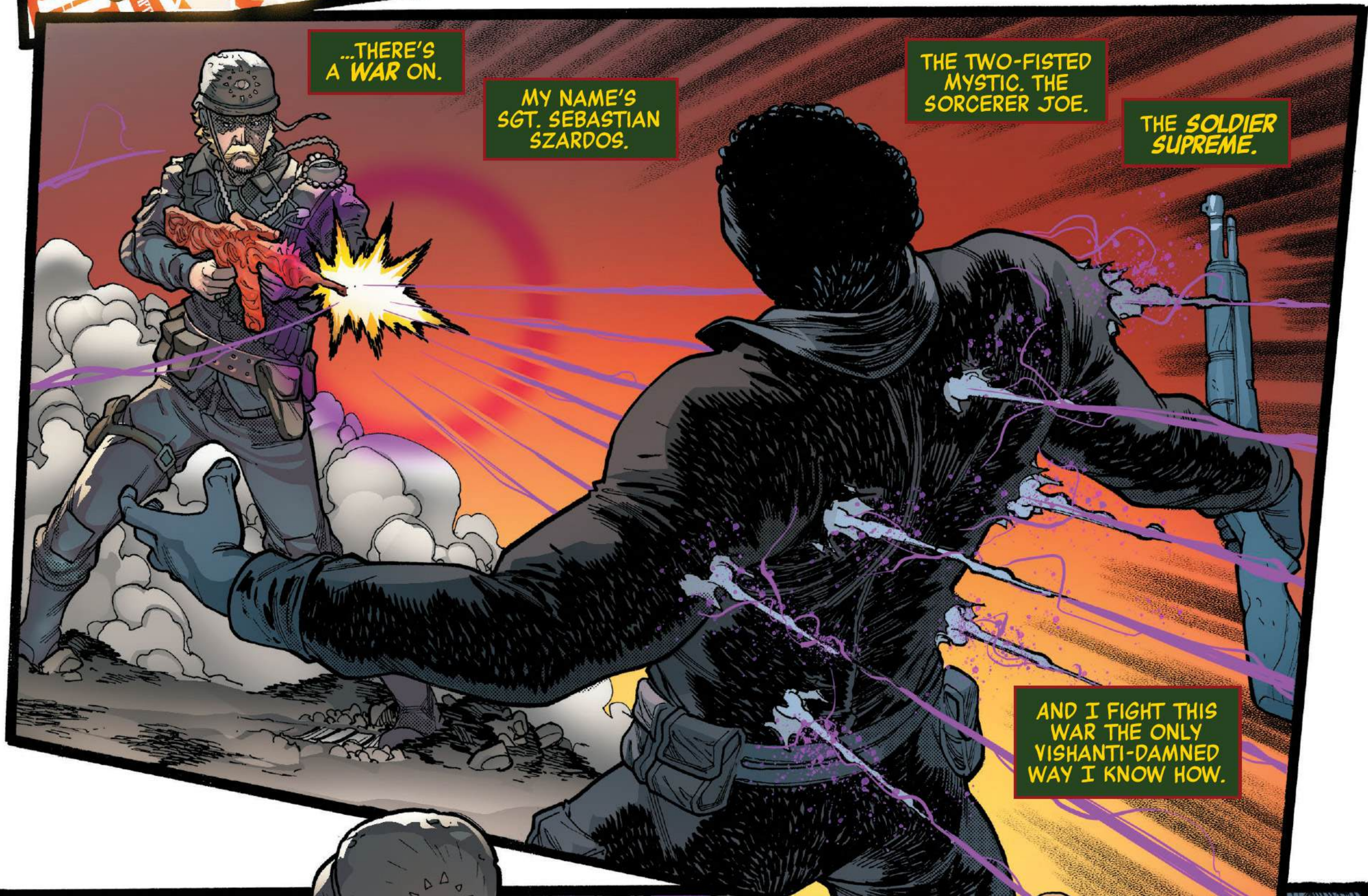


...LIKE A
SOUL SNIPER.

DAMN
YOU! DON'T
MAKE ME...

I'M SURE THERE'S A
SPELL THAT COULD
KNEECAP THIS KINDA
EVIL LICKETY-SPLIT.

BUT THE ANCIENT
ONE NEVER HAD
TIME TO SHOW ME.
'CAUSE IN CASE
YOU HAVEN'T HEARD...



...THERE'S
A WAR ON.

MY NAME'S
SGT. SEBASTIAN
SZARDOS.

THE TWO-FISTED
MYSTIC, THE
SORCERER JOE.

THE **SOLDIER
SUPREME.**

AND I FIGHT THIS
WAR THE ONLY
VISHANTI-DAMNED
WAY I KNOW HOW.



RUN, YOU
IDIOTS!

GET THE HELL
AWAY FROM ME
OR YOU'LL ALL
BE NEXT!

THE WAY WHERE
EVERYBODY **BLEEDS.**

MOST
ESPECIALLY
ME.

WEEKS LATER.

THAT... WAS
THE LAST OF
THEM. EVERY LAST
G.I. ON THE
ISLAND.

I COULDN'T
SAVE A SINGLE
DAMN ONE OF
THEM.

AND THAT WON'T EVEN STOP
HIM, WILL IT? THE SOUL SNIPER
WILL FIND A WAY TO KEEP
COMING.

HOW DO
I **END** THIS,
MASTER?

THIS IS NO
COMMON DEMON
THAT STALKS YOU,
SEBASTIAN. HIS DARK
AURA IS THAT OF AN
ARCHFIEND OF THE
NETHERWORLD.

TO EXORCISE
SUCH A SPIRIT FROM
THIS PLANE... WILL BE
A STRUGGLE UNLIKE
ANY YOU HAVE
EVER FACED.

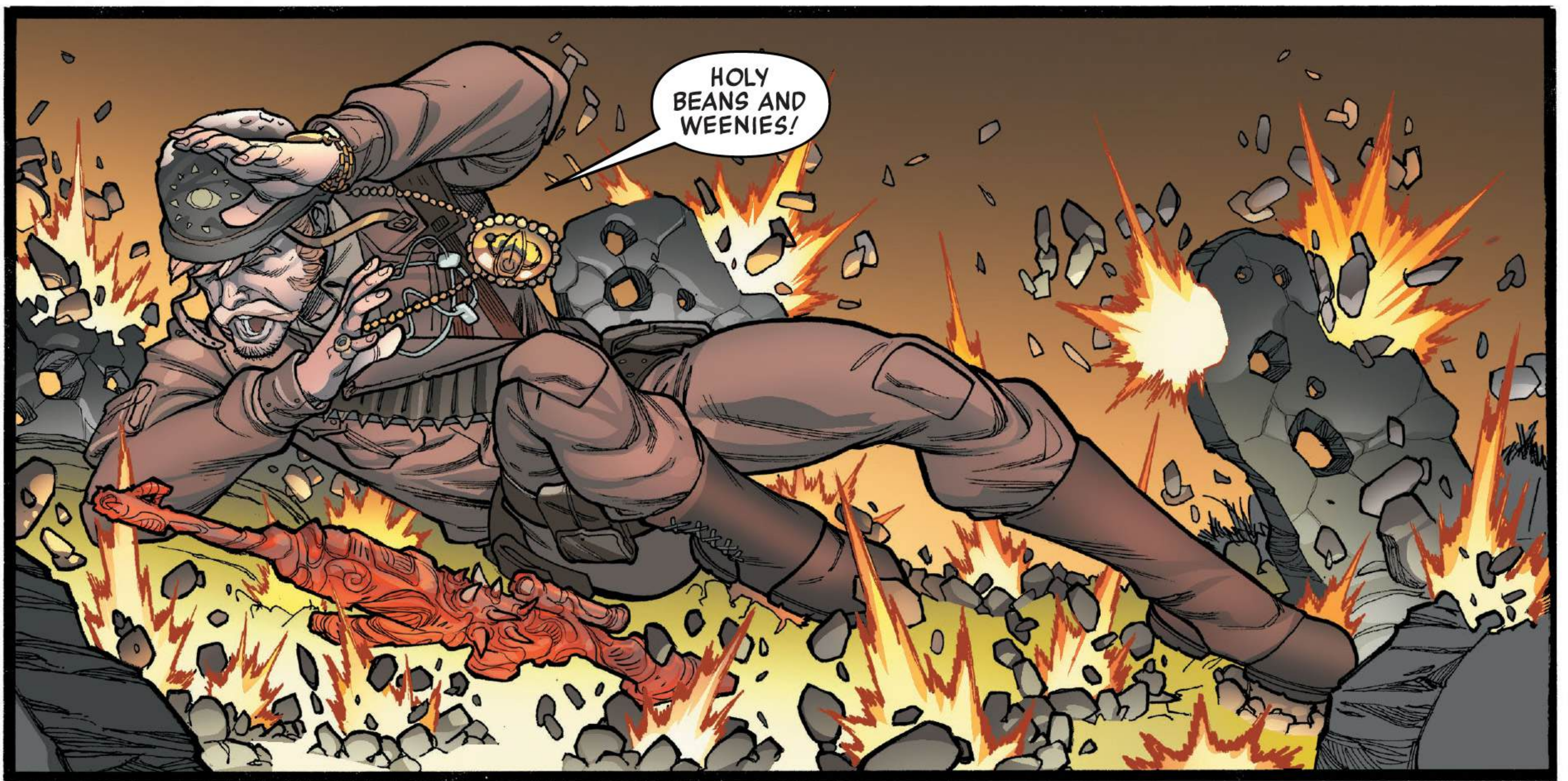
YEAH, WELL,
THEY PRETTY
MUCH **ALL** ARE,
SINCE I MET
YOU.

SO
WHAT DO
I DO?

FIRST, YOU
MUST UNCOVER THE
DEMON'S **TRUE NAME**.
THAT IS THE ONLY WAY
TO HOLD POWER
OVER IT.

AND THEN,
YOU WILL HAVE
TO **LAY HANDS** UPON
THE BODY IT HAS
POSSESSED, TO
CAST IT OUT.

WELL,
THAT DOESN'T
SOUND SO...



HOLY
BEANS AND
WEENIES!



I'M GUESSING
THAT "LAY HANDS
UPON" PART JUST GOT
A DAMN SIGHT
TRICKIER.

ANCIENT
ONE?

LOST THE
CONNECTION.
GREAT.

DON'T
SUPPOSE YOU
WANNA YELL DOWN
YOUR NAME, YOU
HITLER-LOVING
HELL-SCUM!



MEPHISTO.

MEPHISTO.

MEPHISTO.

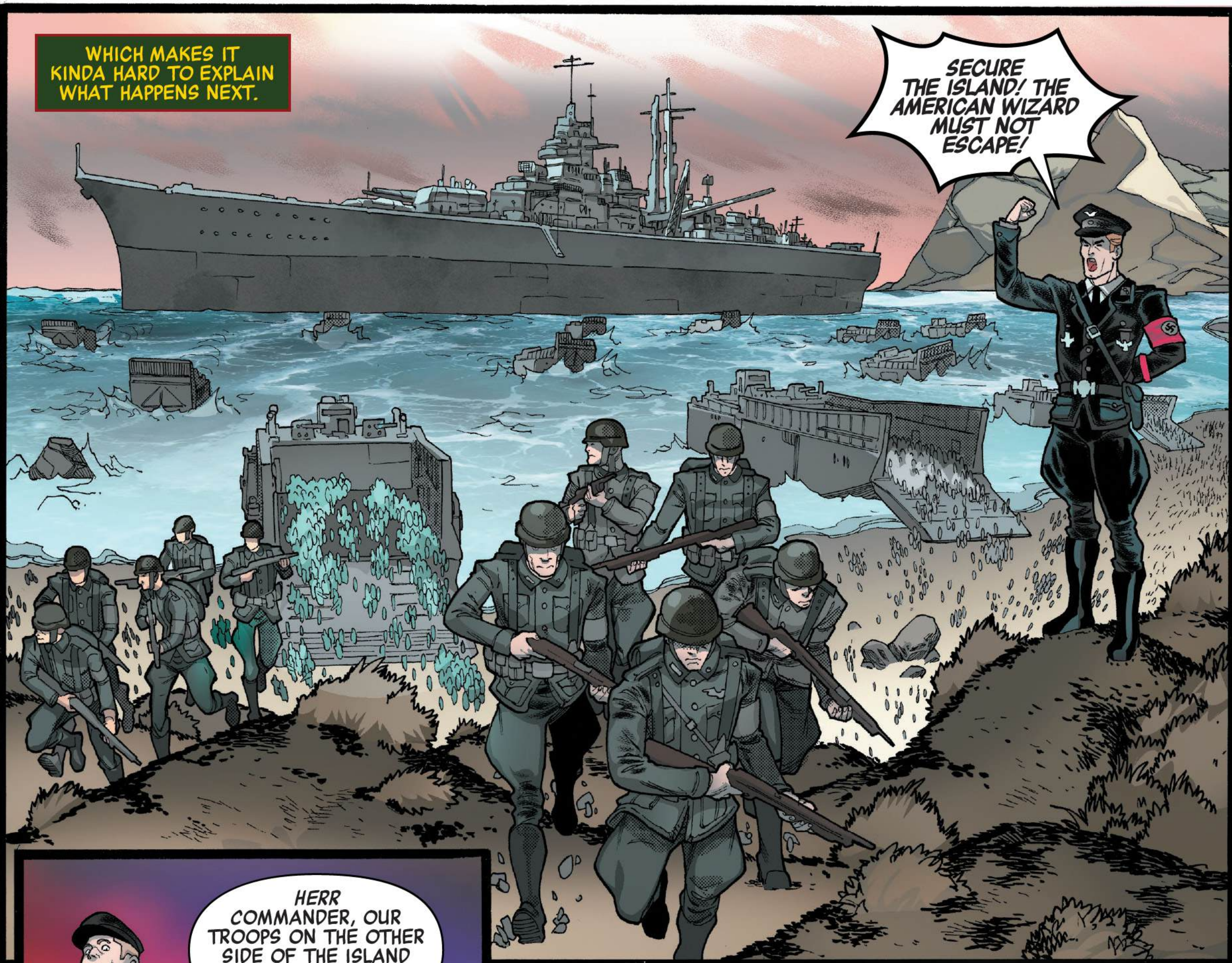
WELL I'LL
BE. AND WHO
SENT YOU, LITTLE
GUYS?

PROBABLY
A *TRICK*,
I FIGURE.

MY OWN UNIT'S
STILL IN THE WIND.
I AIN'T GOT NO
OTHER *BACKUP.*

WHICH MAKES IT
KINDA HARD TO EXPLAIN
WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.

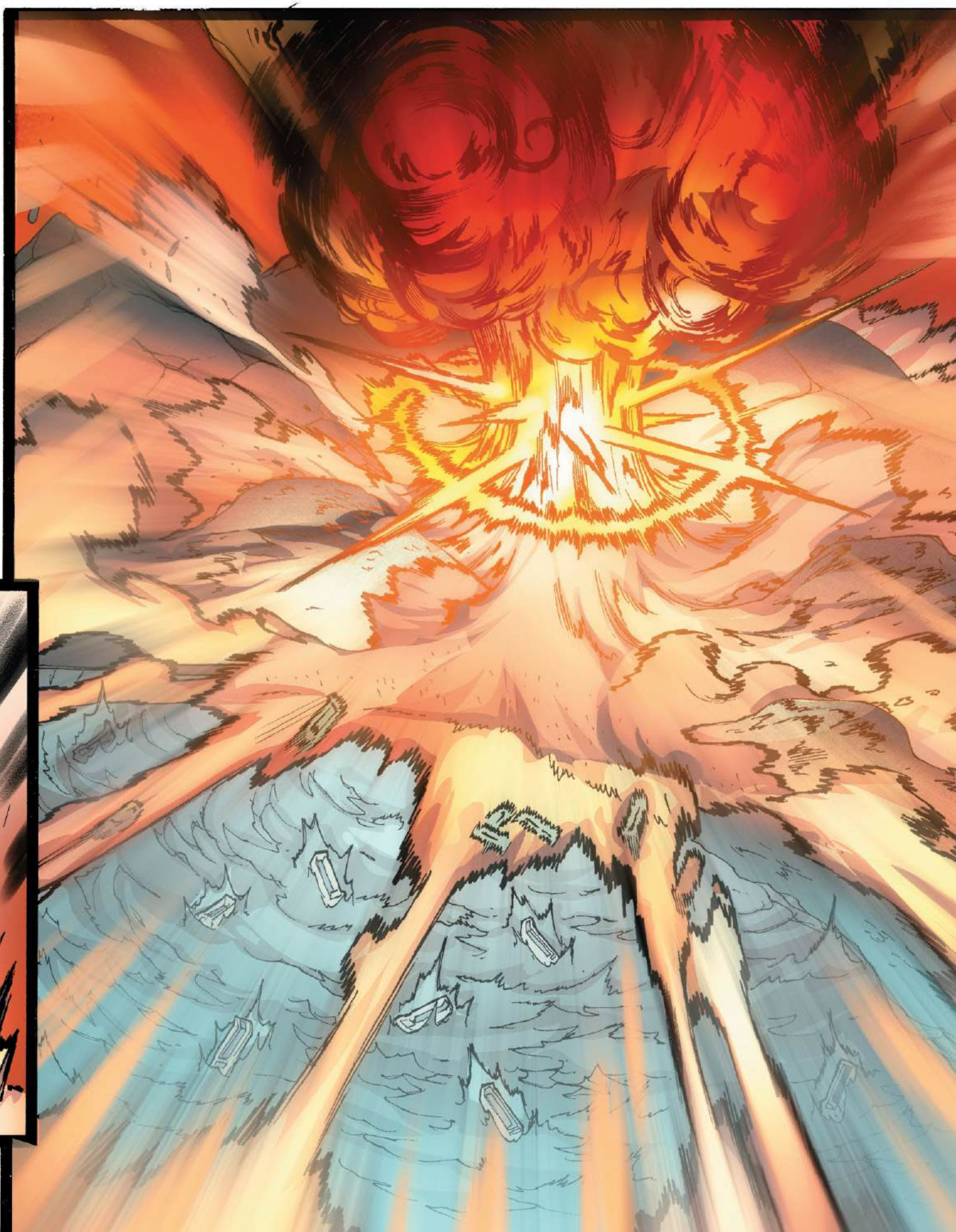
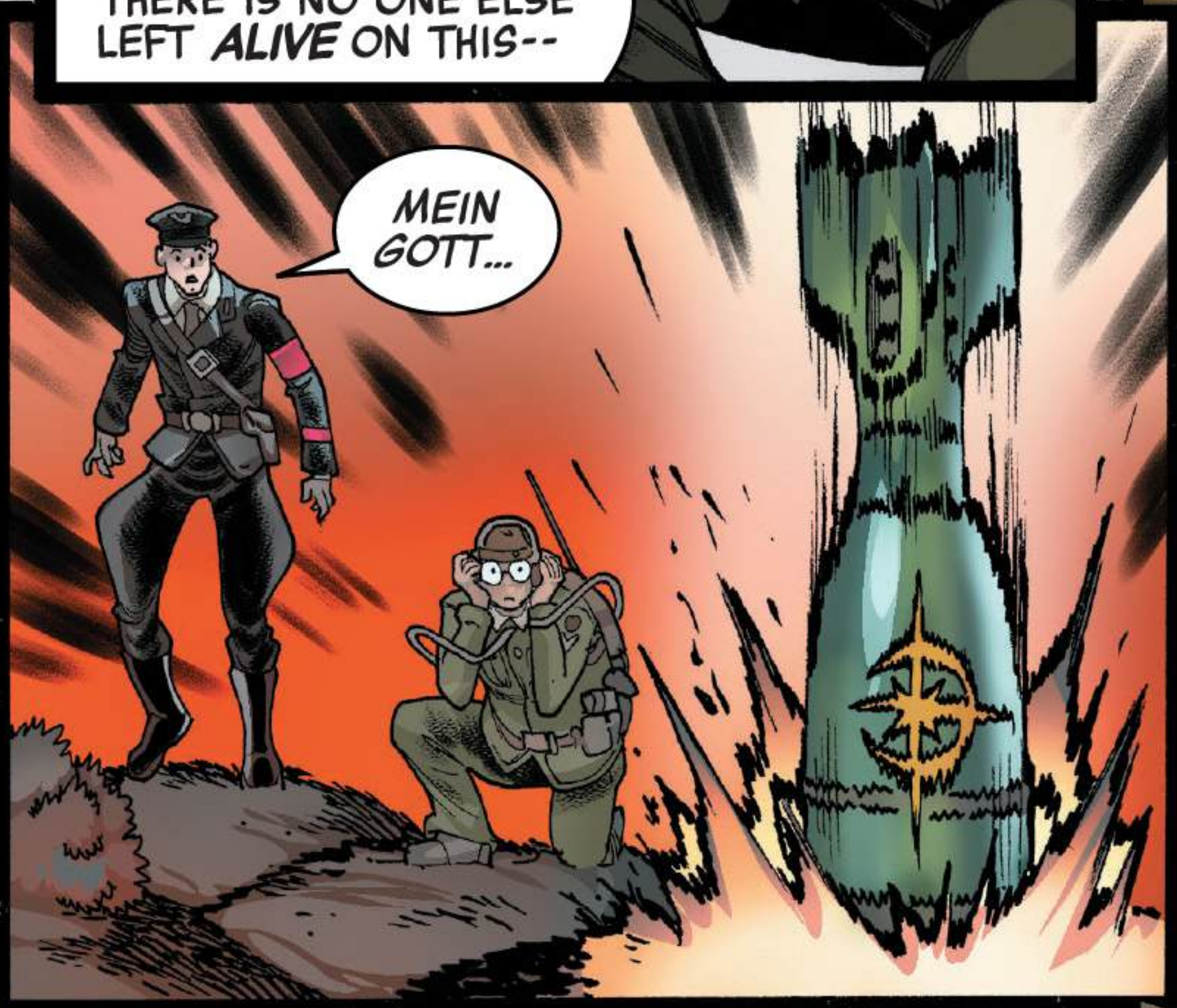
SECURE
THE ISLAND! THE
AMERICAN WIZARD
MUST NOT
ESCAPE!

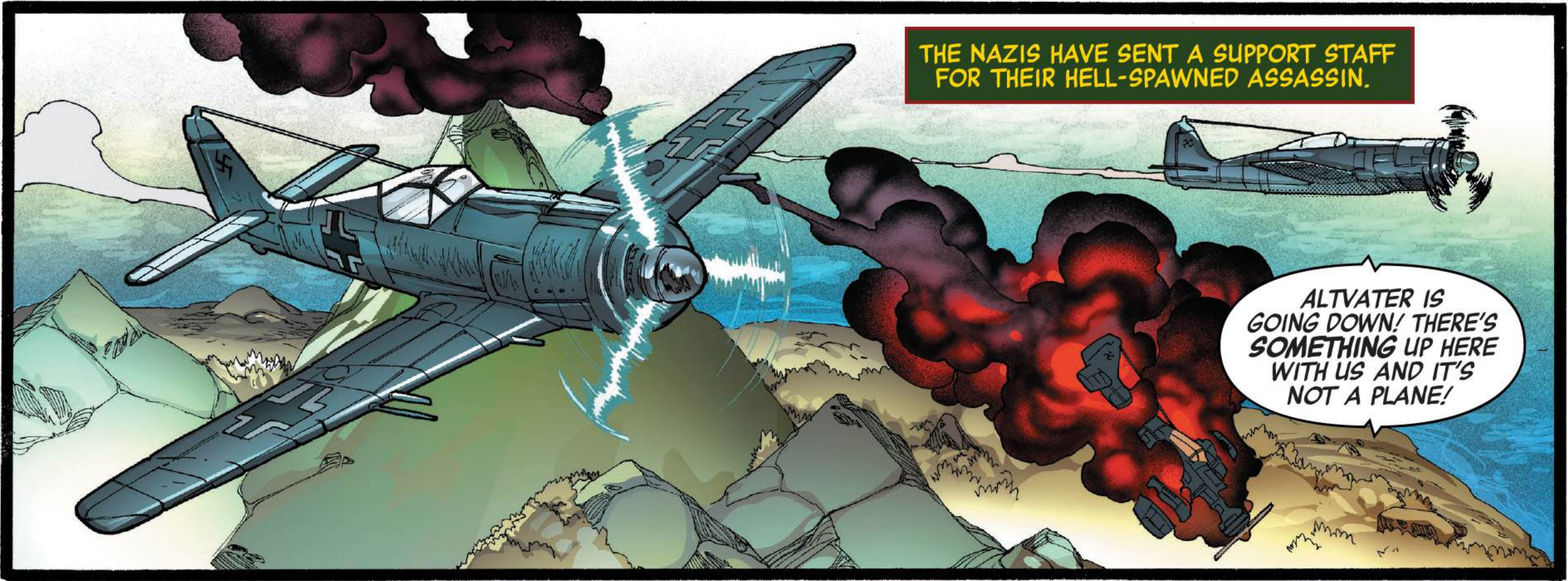


HERR
COMMANDER, OUR
TROOPS ON THE OTHER
SIDE OF THE ISLAND
ARE REPORTING HEAVY
MORTAR FIRE.

MORTARS?
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
EXCEPT FOR THE MYSTIC,
THERE IS NO ONE ELSE
LEFT ALIVE ON THIS--

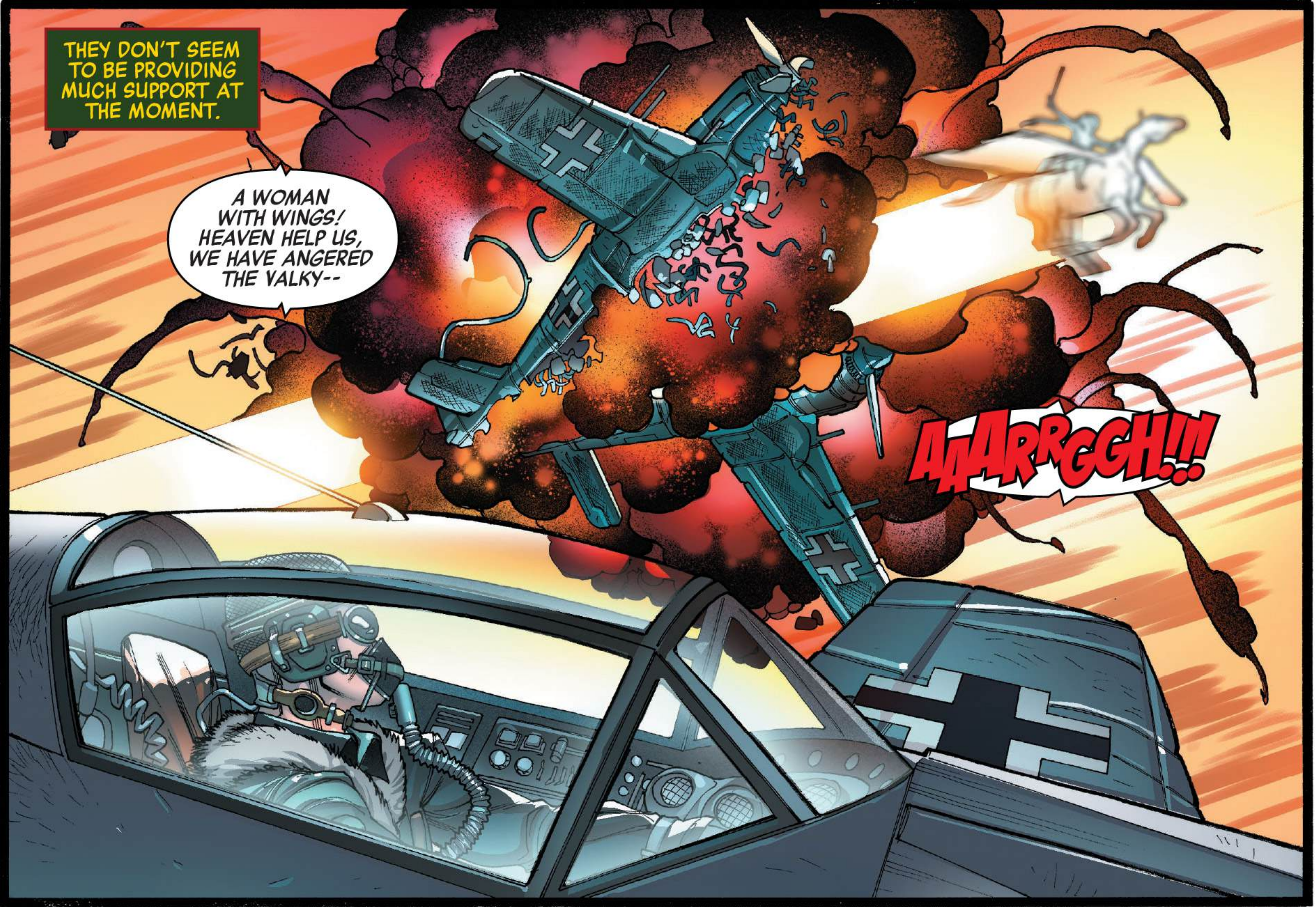
MEIN
GOTT...





THE NAZIS HAVE SENT A SUPPORT STAFF FOR THEIR HELL-SPAWNED ASSASSIN.

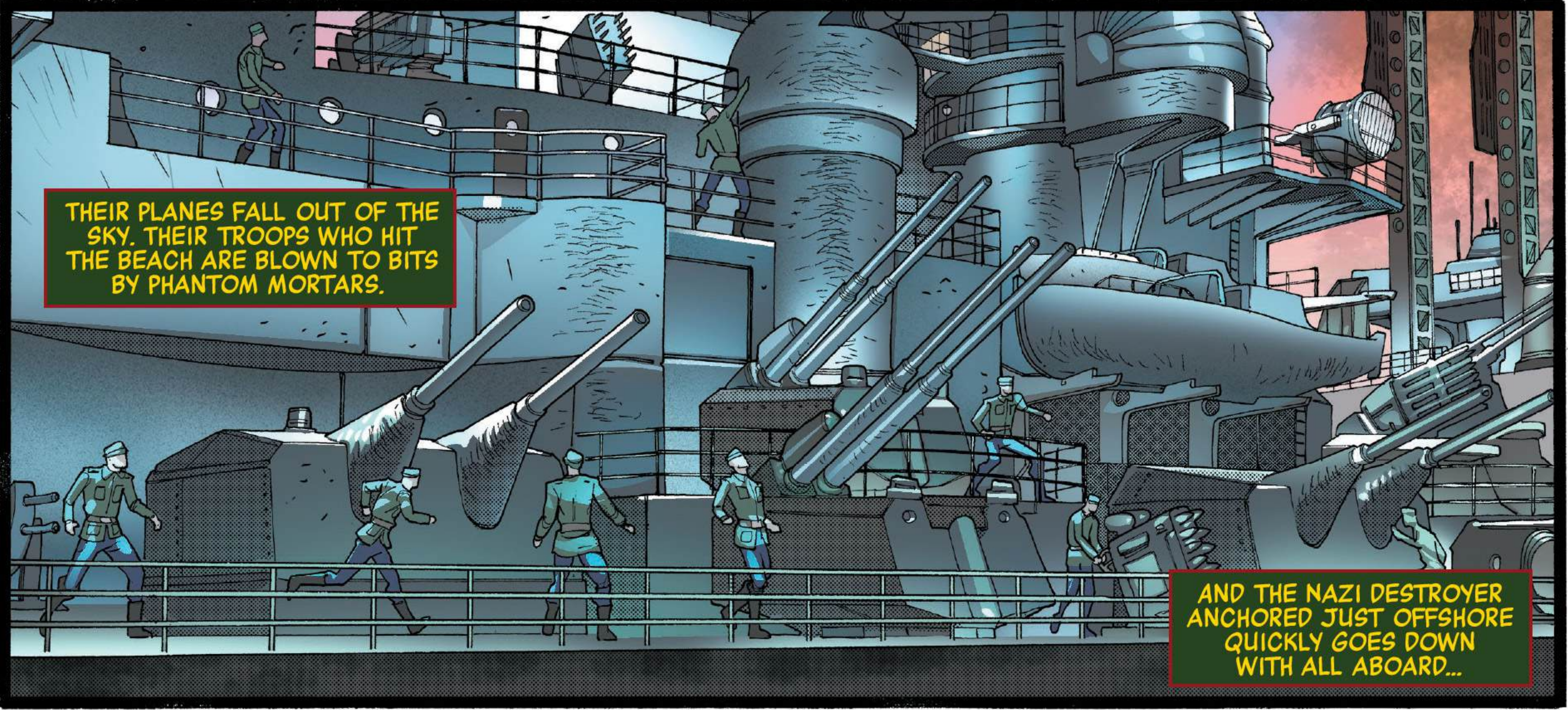
ALTVATER IS GOING DOWN! THERE'S SOMETHING UP HERE WITH US AND IT'S NOT A PLANE!



THEY DON'T SEEM TO BE PROVIDING MUCH SUPPORT AT THE MOMENT.

A WOMAN WITH WINGS! HEAVEN HELP US, WE HAVE ANGERED THE VALKY--

AARRRGH!!!



THEIR PLANES FALL OUT OF THE SKY. THEIR TROOPS WHO HIT THE BEACH ARE BLOWN TO BITS BY PHANTOM MORTARS.

AND THE NAZI DESTROYER ANCHORED JUST OFFSHORE QUICKLY GOES DOWN WITH ALL ABOARD...

...DUE TO A FREAK
THUNDERSTORM.

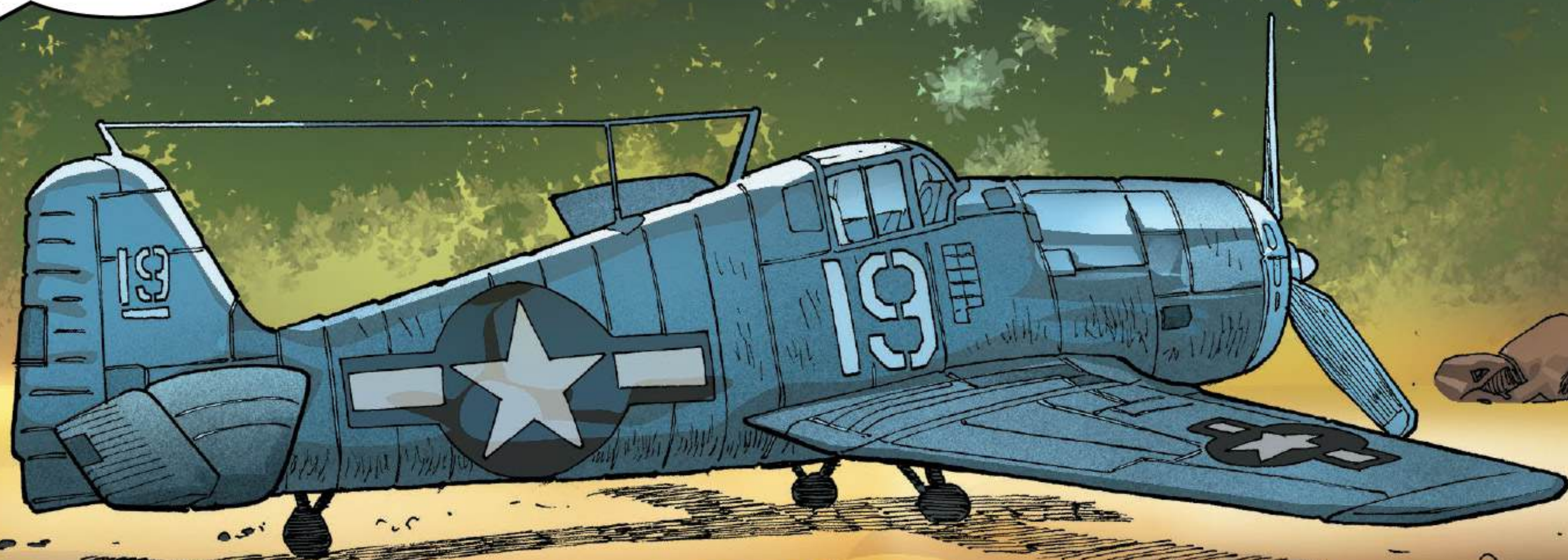


SO, I GOT A NAME FROM
SOME BIRDS. I GOT
MYSTERIOUS *GUARDIAN*
ANGELS WATCHING MY BACK.

NOW ALL I NEED
TO TAKE DOWN
THE SOUL SNIPER...

...IS A SET
OF *WINGS*.

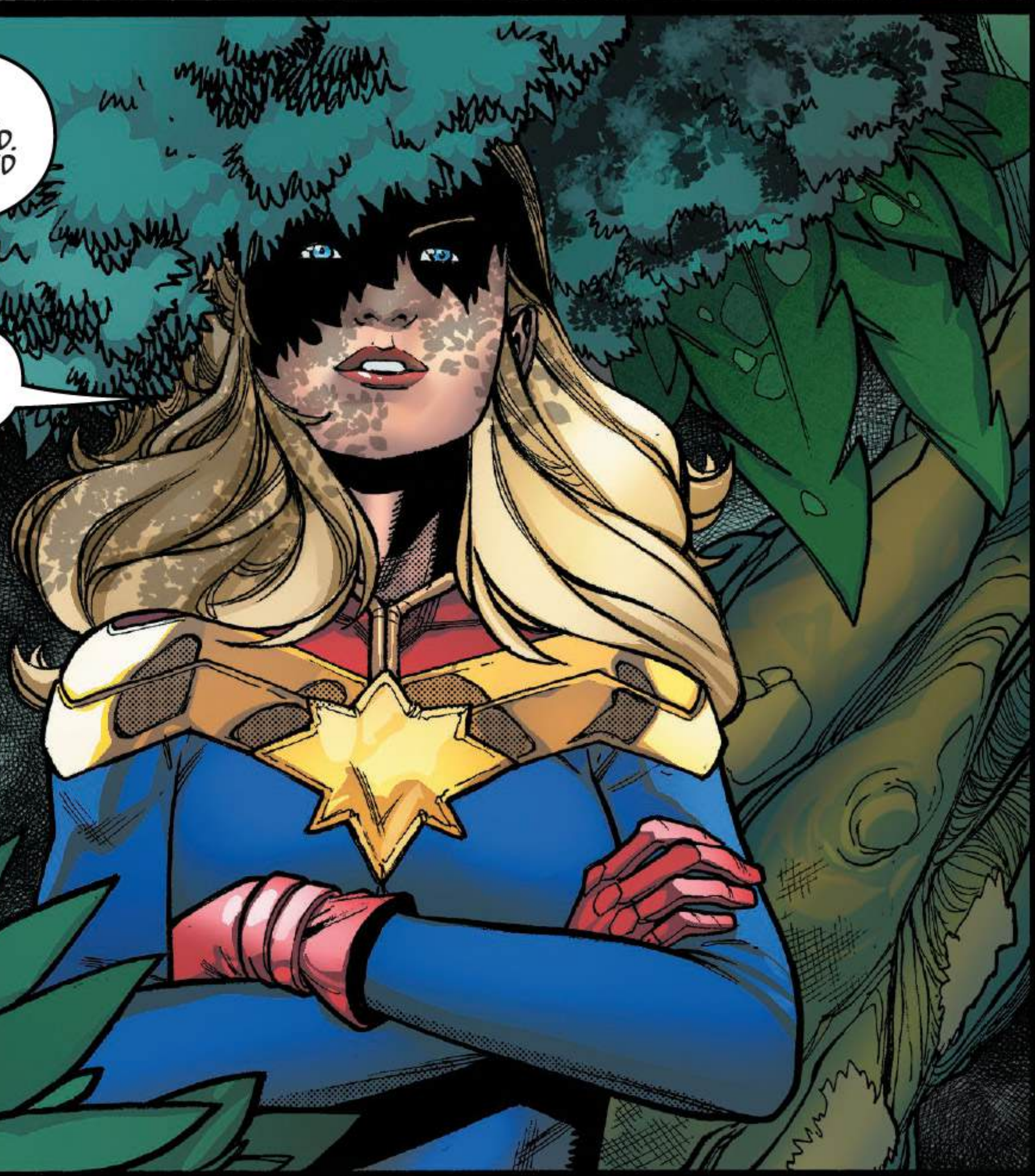
WHOA.
NOW, WHO DO
YOU SUPPOSE
WENT AND LEFT
YOU HERE,
DARLING?

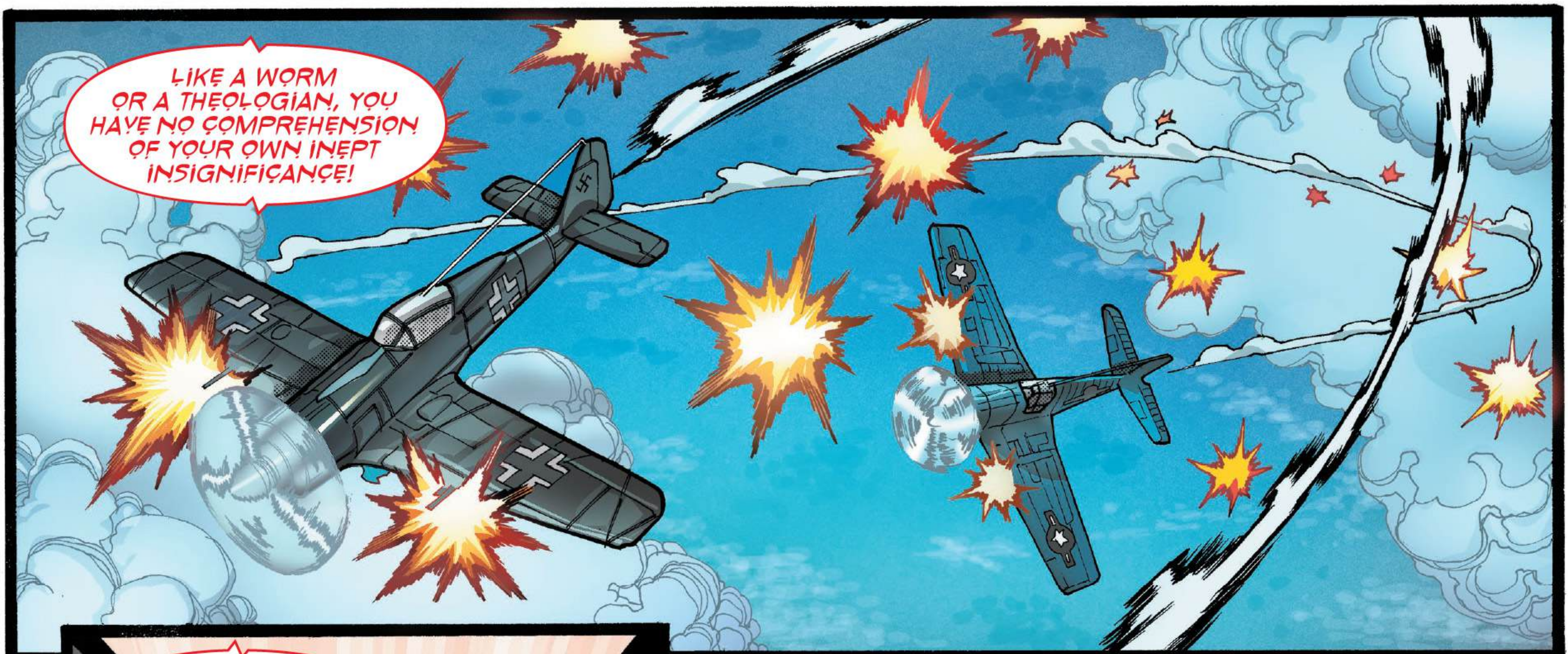
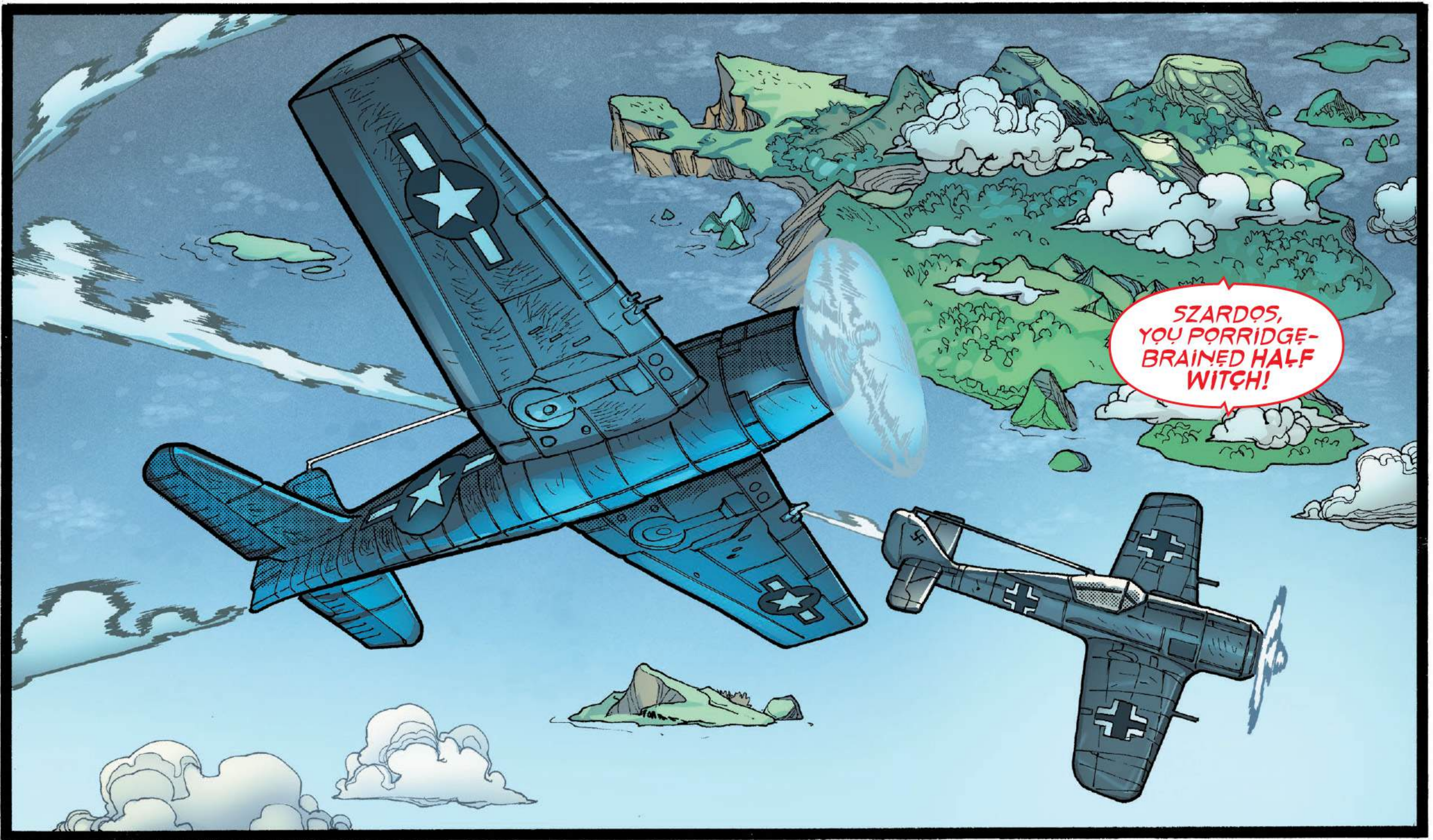


GRUMMAN
F6F HELLCAT.
380 TOP SPEED.
WING-MOUNTED
.50 CALS.

SHE'LL
DO.

GO
GET 'EM,
SARGE.







...THAT THE EYE
OF AGAMOTTO
NEVER LEAVES
THIS ISLAND!

HA HA
HAAA!

YEAH,
THAT'S IT,
PAL. YOU SHOT
ME UP NICE AND
GOOD, DIDN'T
YOU?

NOW COME
IN FOR A FRONT-
ROW SEAT WHILE YOU
FINISH ME OFF. JUST
LIKE THE COCKY
LITTLE **SADIST**
YOU ARE.

DESPITE THE
BEST EFFORTS OF
YOUR AVENGING
ANGELS, YOU,
SZARDOS, WERE NEVER
MEANT TO BE ONE OF
HISTORY'S GREATEST
HEROES!

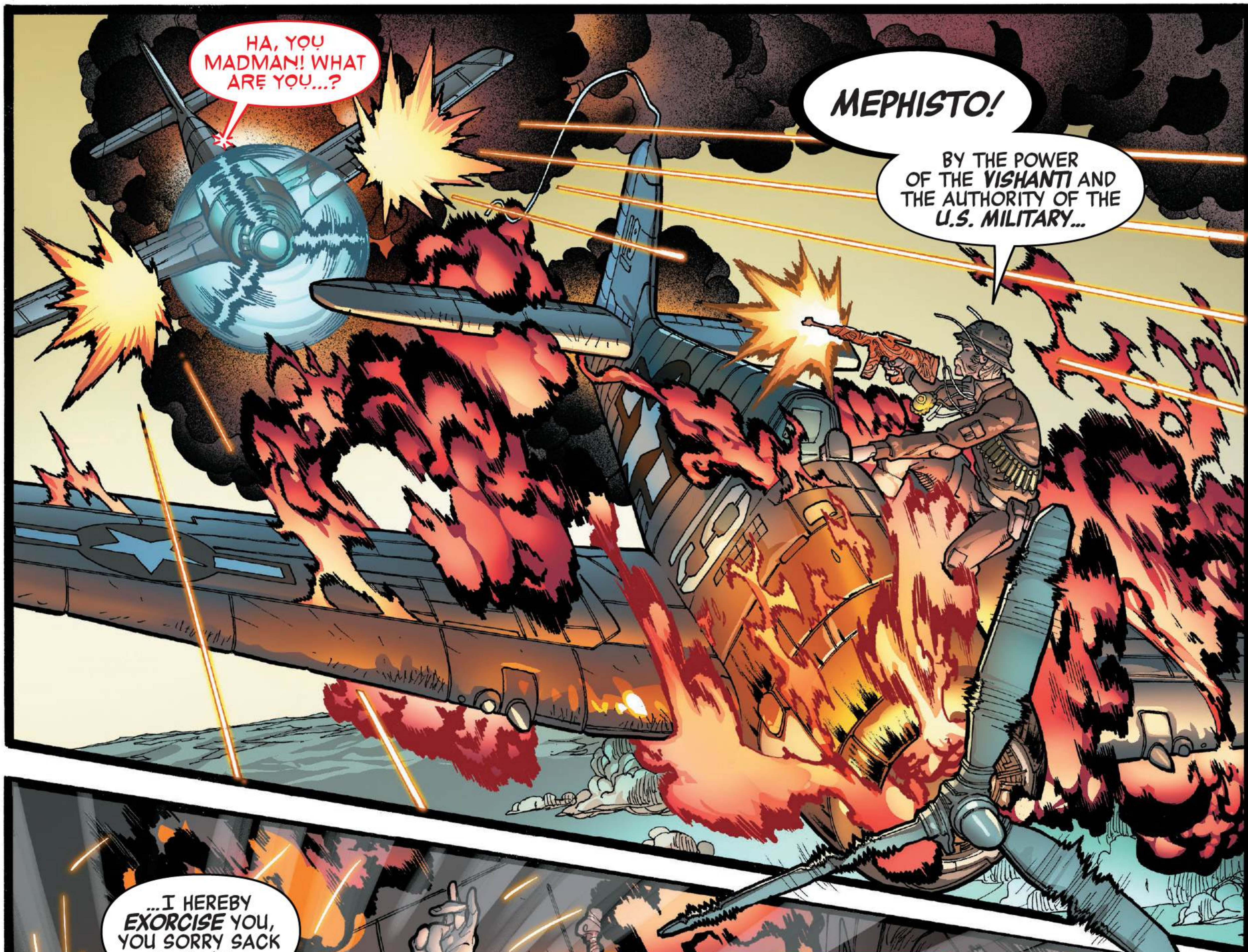


INSTEAD
YOU WILL
BECOME A
FORGOTTEN
FOOTNOTE!



NOTABLE
ONLY FOR HOW
YOUR DEATH HELPED
ME UNRAVEL THE
EARTH! ONE ERA
AT A TIME!

JUST GOTTA LAY
MY HANDS ON HIM,
HUH? WELL, HERE
GOES EVERYTHING.



HA, YOU
MADMAN! WHAT
ARE YOU...?

MEPHISTO!

BY THE POWER
OF THE *VISHANTI* AND
THE AUTHORITY OF THE
U.S. MILITARY...



...I HEREBY
EXORCISE YOU,
YOU SORRY SACK
OF #&\$%!

THE OLD MAN WAS
RIGHT. IT'S THE
TOUGHEST SCRAP
I'VE EVER SCRAPPED.

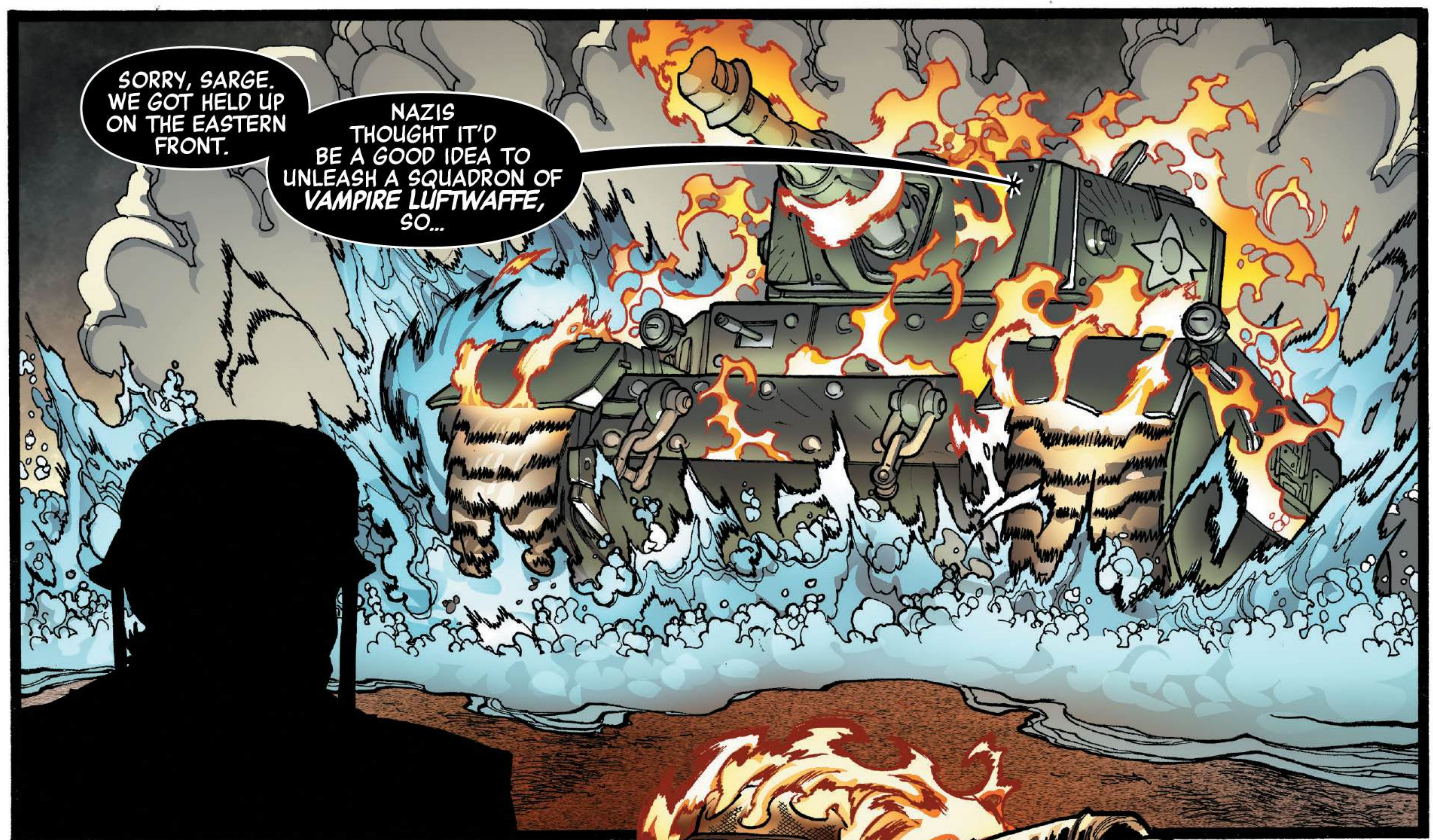
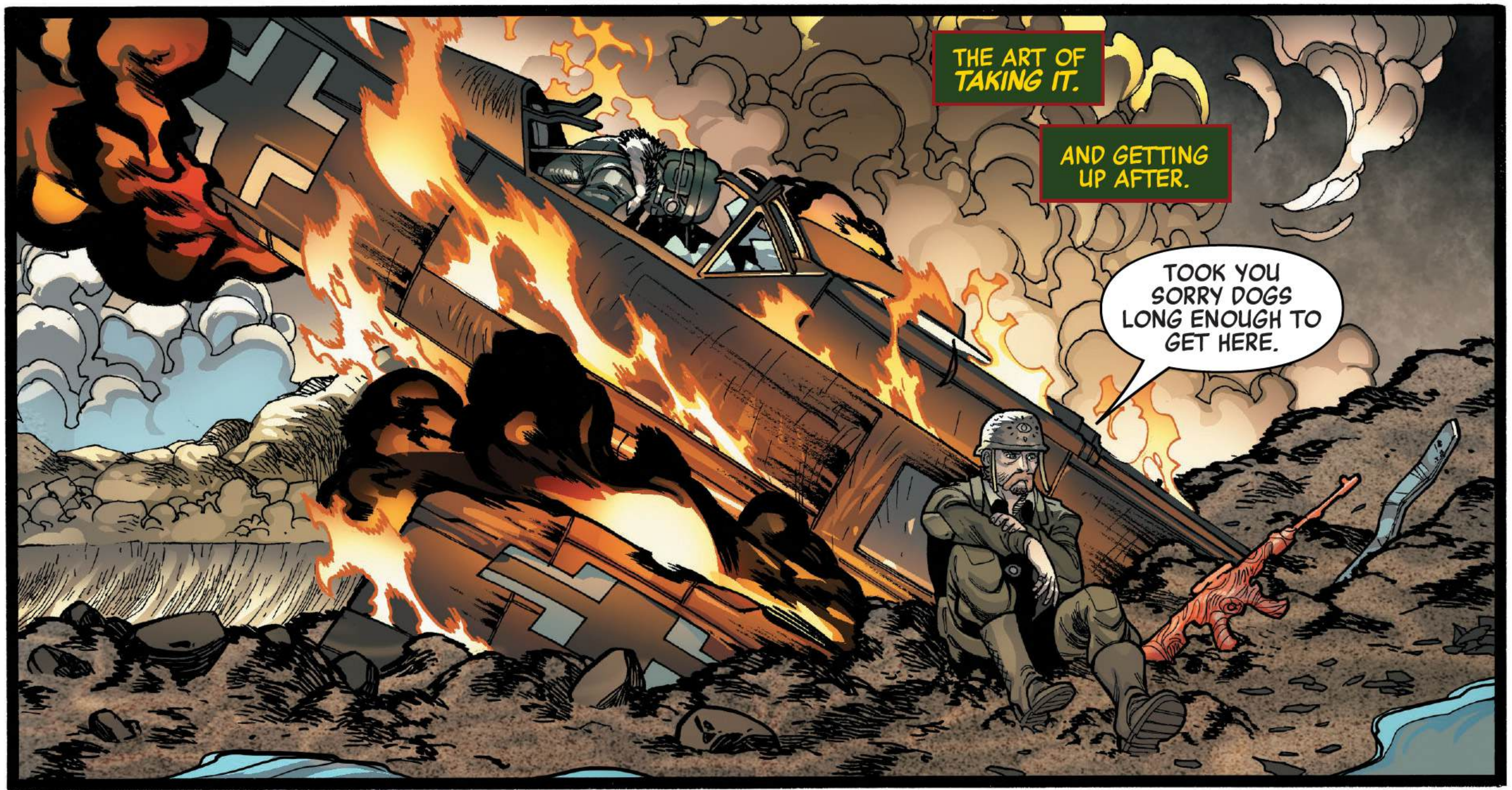
A *DOG*FIGHT
WITH THE DEVIL
HIMSELF.

BUT HERE'S THE
THING ABOUT
DEVILS...

...BOY, THEY SURE LOVE TO DISH IT
OUT... BUT WHEN THEY COME UP
AGAINST SOMEBODY WHO
CAN SOCK 'EM RIGHT BACK...

...WELL, THEY SURE
CAN'T TAKE IT.

AND SOMETIMES
THAT'S ALL MAGIC IS.





GUNNED IT
OUT WITH A
POSSESSED
SUB.

FOUGHT
A SOUL
SNIPER.

PERFORMED
AN EXORCISM AT
THIRTY THOUSAND
FEET.

SO NAH,
JUST THE
USUAL.

HRRRRRGH!

WAR-THING
WANTS TO KNOW
IF YOU'RE READY TO
GET BACK TO BEING
THE **SECRET INVADERS**
OR IF YOU FOUND
YOURSELF SOME
NEW CREW OUT
HERE?



SARGE?

NOT EXACTLY
SURE WHAT I
FOUND, **BLADE**. SOME
AVENGING ANGELS,
I GUESS.

ALL I
KNOW IS, THE
OLD MYSTIC GRAVEL
IN MY GUTS IS
TELLING ME...



...THAT THEY'RE
FIGHTING A WAR
THAT'S SOMEHOW
EVEN **BIGGER**
THAN OURS.

AND WE'D
BETTER BE
READY TO LEND
A HAND.

58 HISTORY'S MIGHTIEST HEROES PART TWO
"THE WAY OF THE GHOST"



**JAPAN.
THE EDO
PERIOD.**

FROM SHORE TO
SUMMIT, PALACE
TO FIELD...

...WHEREVER
HONOR WAS
BEING ASSAILED...

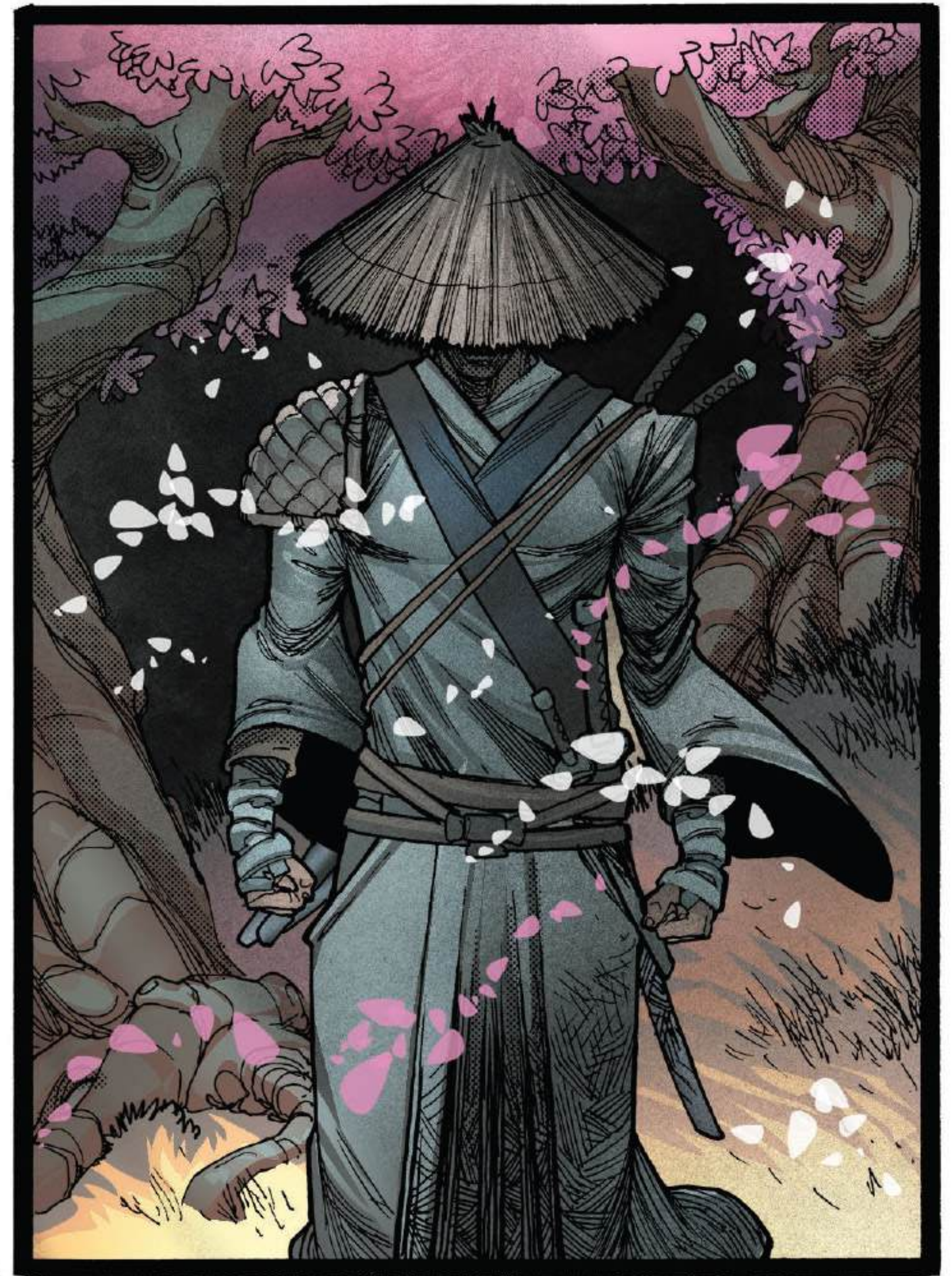
...WHEREVER
SWORDS WERE
UNSHEATHED FOR
THE SAKE OF SIN...

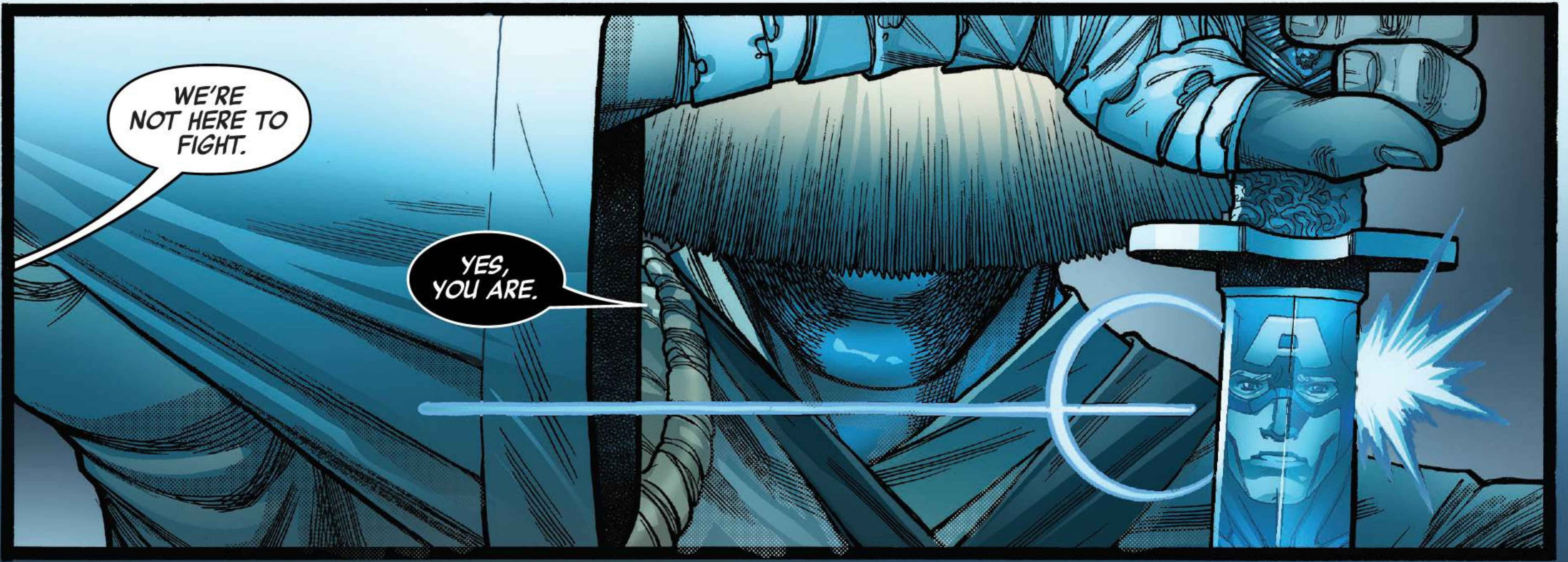
...THERE, HE
WALKED.

IF YOUR VILLAGE HAD
FALLEN PREY TO WILD
BRIGANDS OR CRUEL
DAIMYOS, YOU MIGHT WAKE
ONE MORNING TO FIND HIS
FOOTSTEPS STILL *SMOKING*
ON THE ROADWAY...

...AND THE ASSAILANTS
STRUCK DOWN IN
MIDNIGHT DUELS...

...AS IF BY
A *GHOST*.





WE'RE
NOT HERE TO
FIGHT.

YES,
YOU ARE.



FOR SO
ARE THE
ASSASSINS
WHO STALK US
FROM THE
SHADOWS.



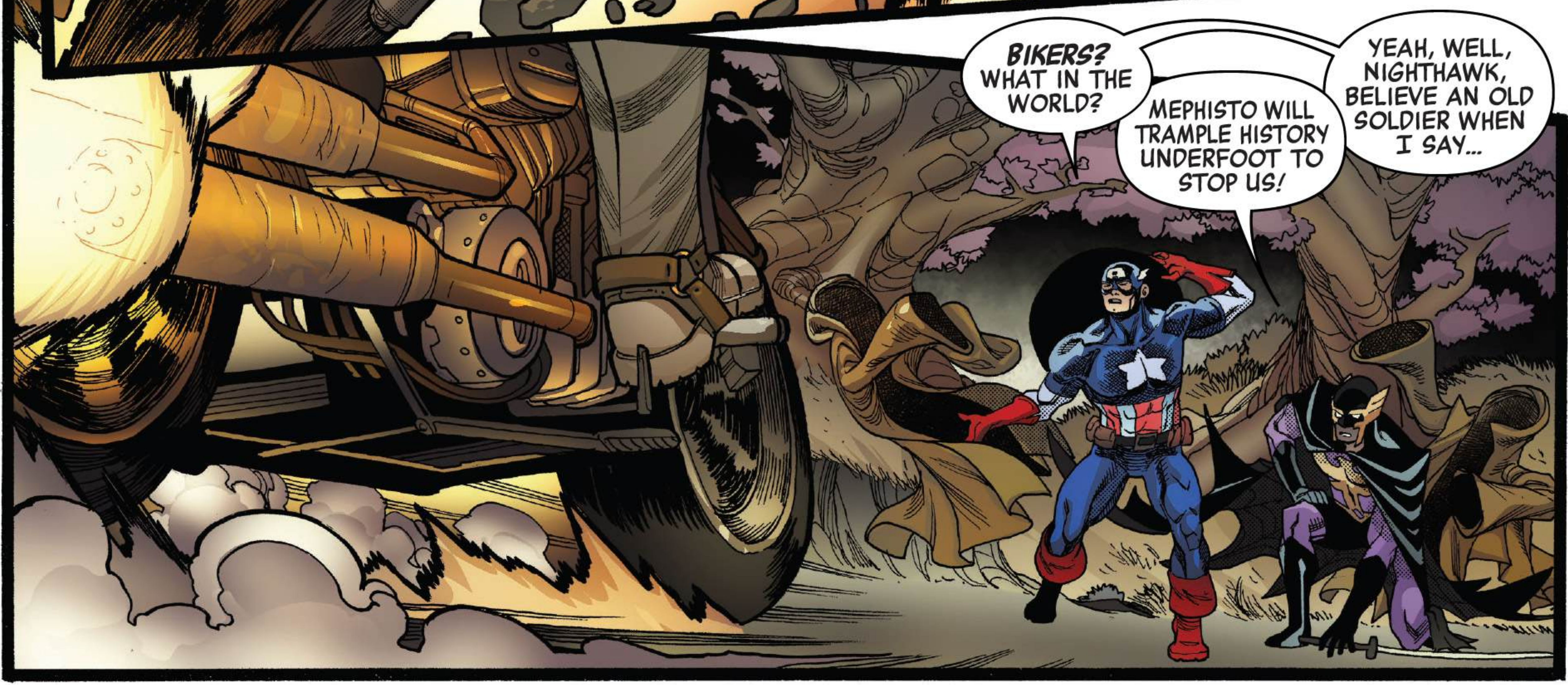
THEY
ARE WITH US
NOW.

I
DON'T HEAR
ANYTHING.

BECAUSE
YOU LISTEN WITH
THE EARS OF
A MAN.



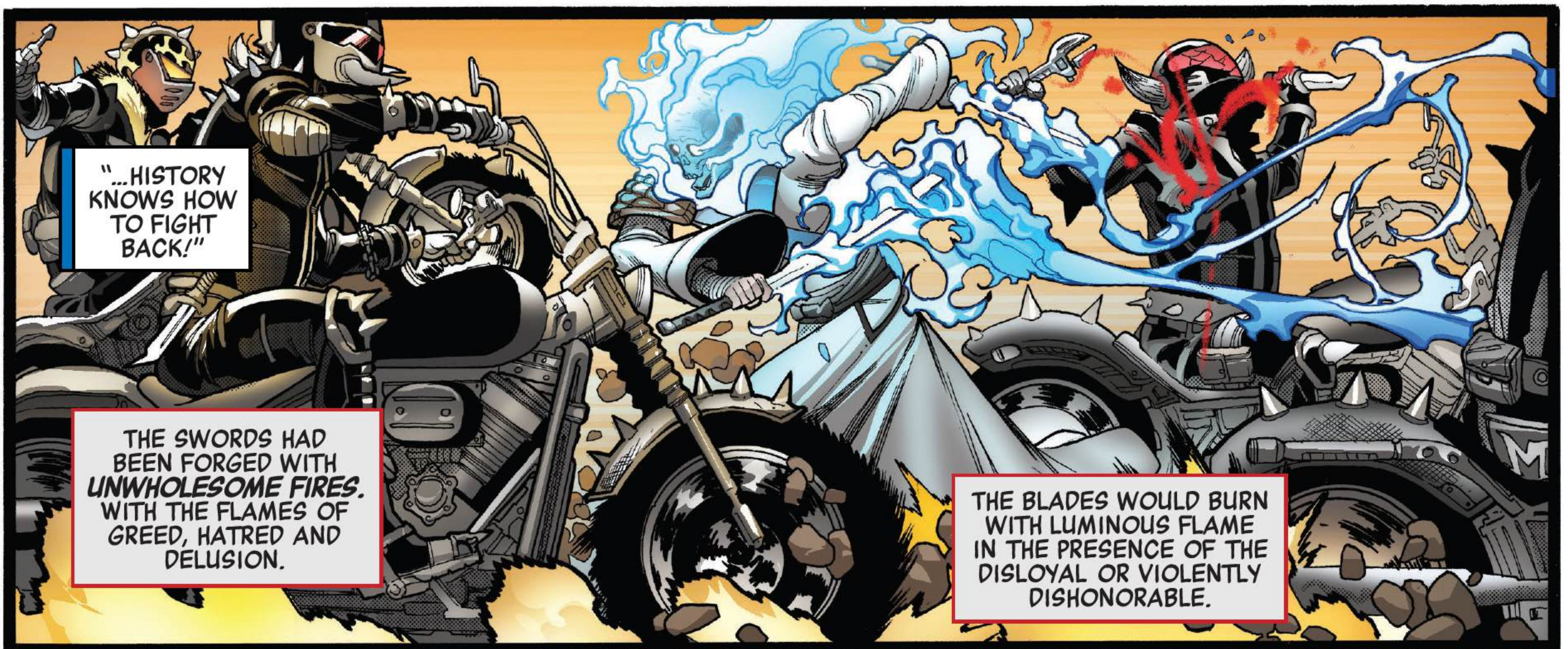
WHILE MY
EARS ARE
ALREADY IN THE
HEAVENS.



BIKERS?
WHAT IN THE
WORLD?

MEPHISTO WILL
TRAMPLE HISTORY
UNDERFOOT TO
STOP US!

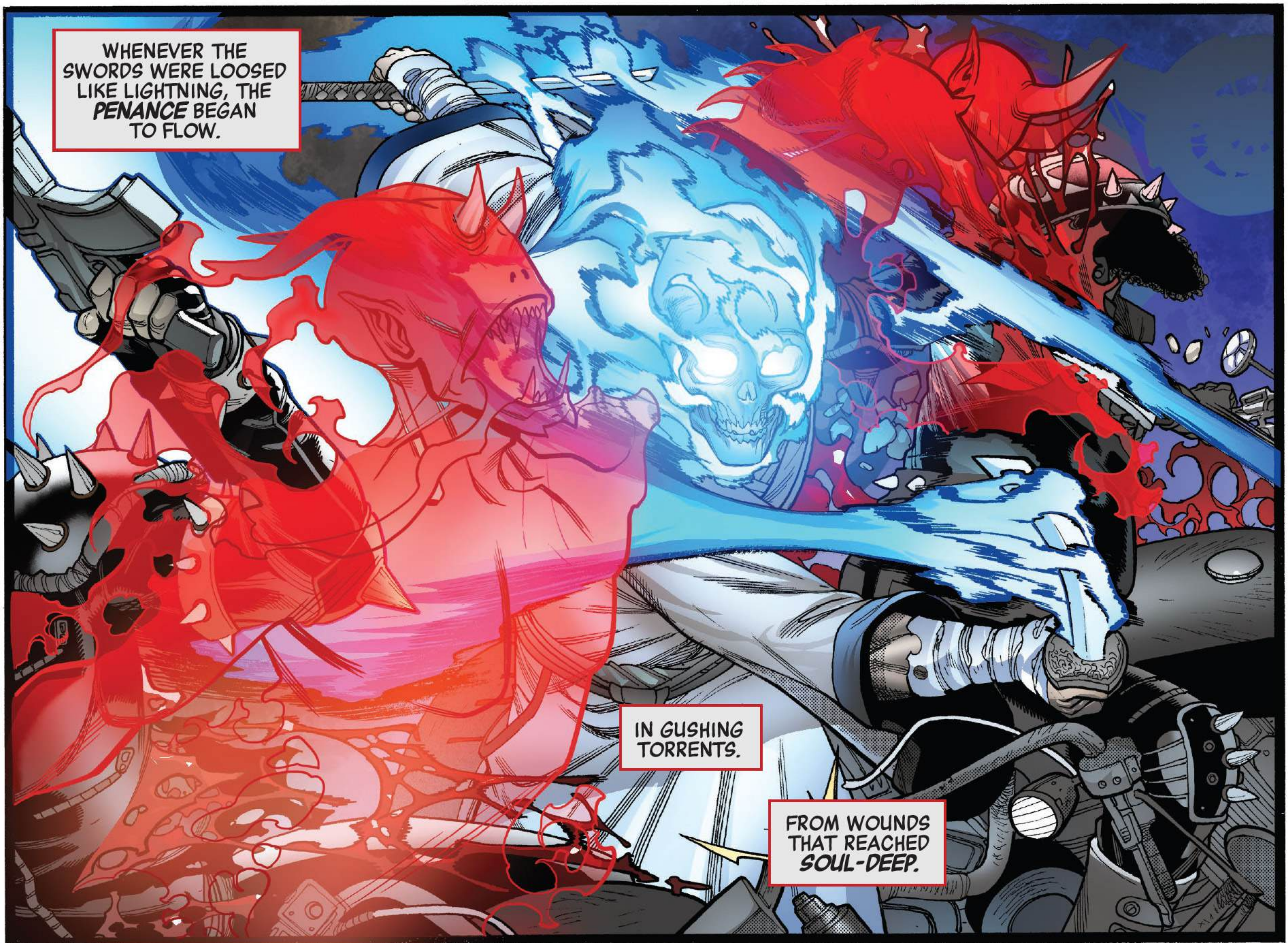
YEAH, WELL,
NIGHTHAWK,
BELIEVE AN OLD
SOLDIER WHEN
I SAY...



"...HISTORY KNOWS HOW TO FIGHT BACK!"

THE SWORDS HAD BEEN FORGED WITH **UNWHOLESOME FIRES**. WITH THE FLAMES OF GREED, HATRED AND DELUSION.

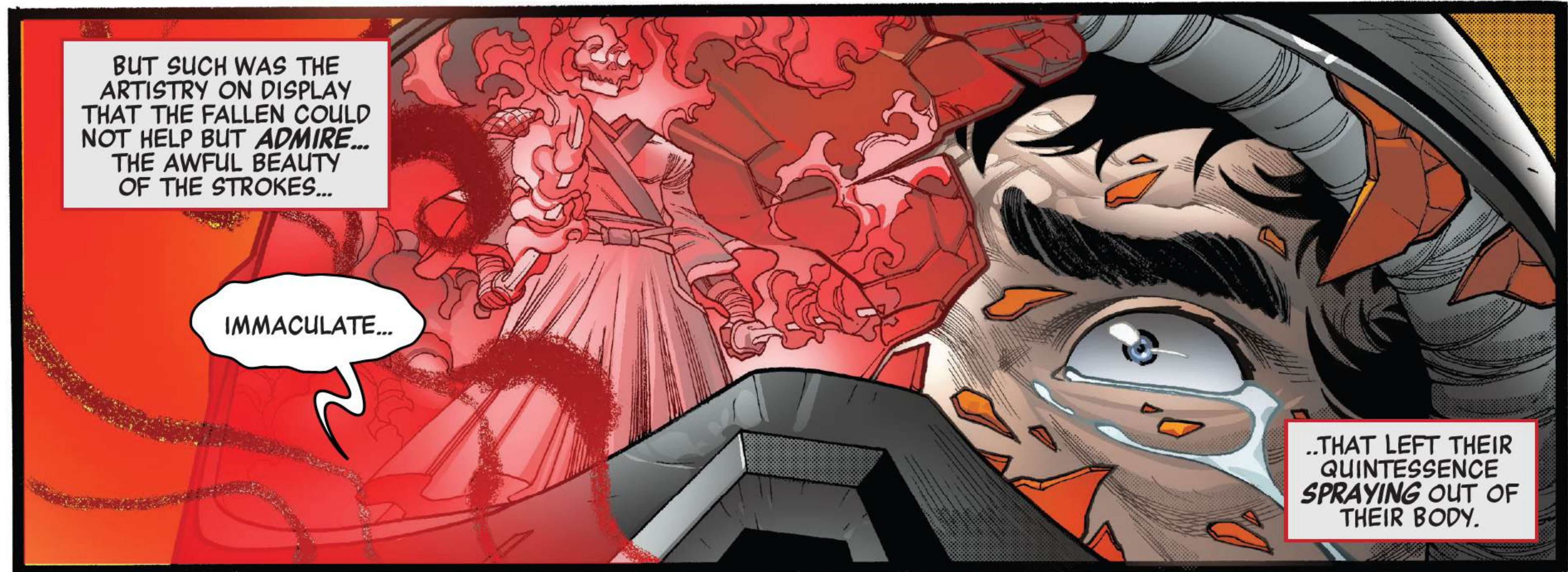
THE BLADES WOULD BURN WITH LUMINOUS FLAME IN THE PRESENCE OF THE DISLOYAL OR VIOLENTLY DISHONORABLE.



WHENEVER THE SWORDS WERE LOOSED LIKE LIGHTNING, THE **PENANCE** BEGAN TO FLOW.

IN GUSHING TORRENTS.

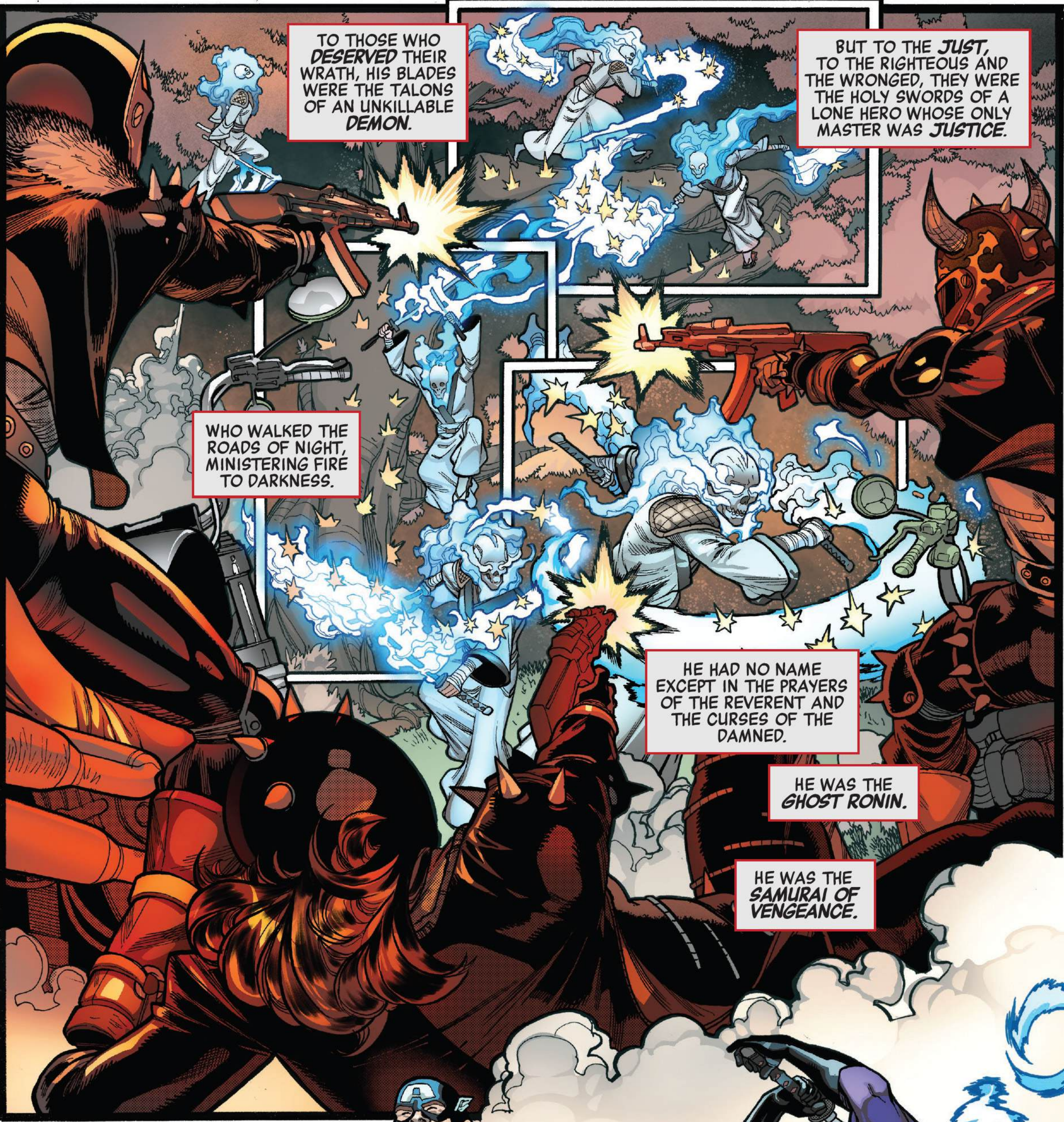
FROM WOUNDS THAT REACHED **SOUL-DEEP**.



BUT SUCH WAS THE ARTISTRY ON DISPLAY THAT THE FALLEN COULD NOT HELP BUT **ADMIRE**... THE AWFUL BEAUTY OF THE STROKES...

IMMACULATE...

..THAT LEFT THEIR QUINTESSENCE **SPRAYING** OUT OF THEIR BODY.



TO THOSE WHO
DESERVED THEIR
WRATH, HIS BLADES
WERE THE TALONS
OF AN UNKILLABLE
DEMON.

BUT TO THE *JUST*,
TO THE RIGHTEOUS AND
THE WRONGED, THEY WERE
THE HOLY SWORDS OF A
LONE HERO WHOSE ONLY
MASTER WAS *JUSTICE*.

WHO WALKED THE
ROADS OF NIGHT,
MINISTERING FIRE
TO DARKNESS.

HE HAD NO NAME
EXCEPT IN THE PRAYERS
OF THE REVERENT AND
THE CURSES OF THE
DAMNED.

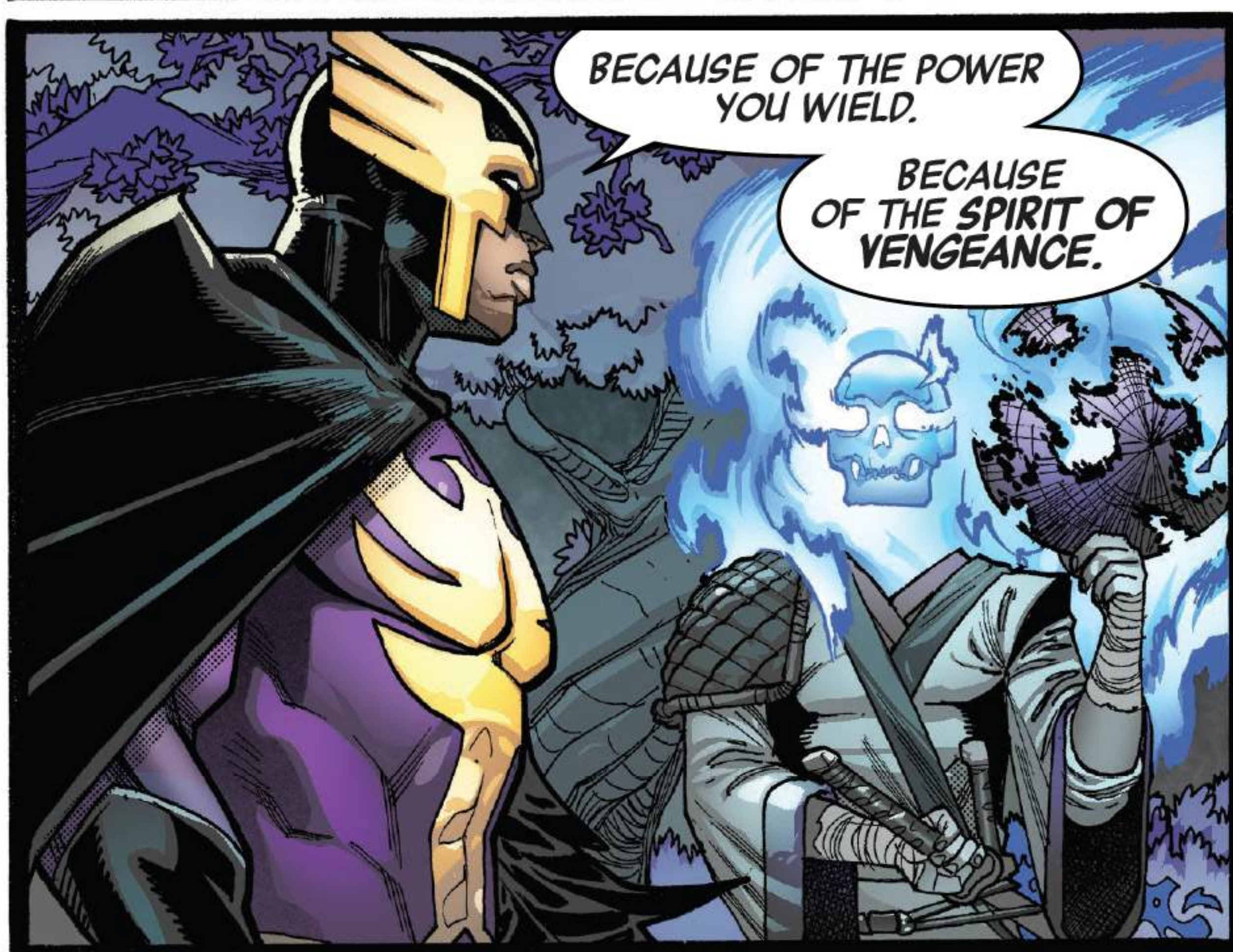
HE WAS THE
GHOST RONIN.

HE WAS THE
*SAMURAI OF
VENGEANCE*.

AND ON THIS DAY,
FOR ONCE IN ALL
HIS YEARS...



...HE DID
NOT FIGHT
ALONE.





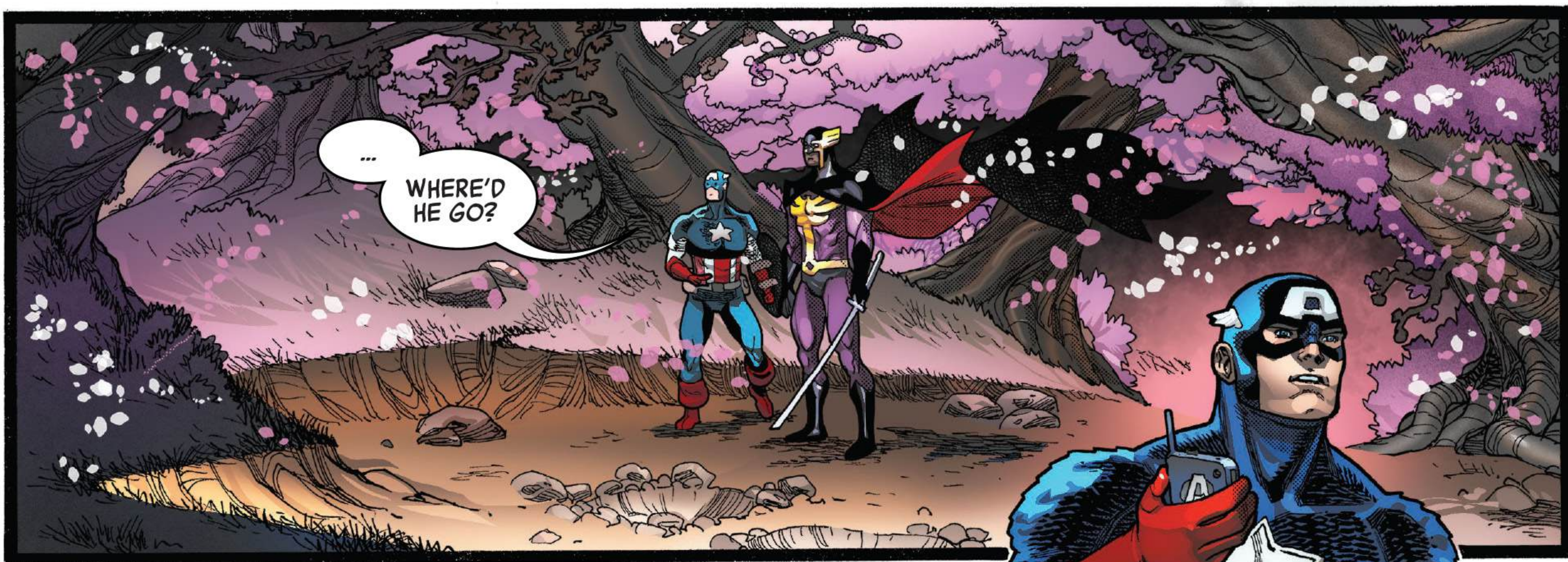
THE JOURNEY HAS BEEN MORE PERILOUS THAN YOU EVER IMAGINED. AND IT HAS ONLY JUST BEGUN TO CLAIM ITS TOLL.

BUT YOU ARE ON THE RIGHT PATH. FELLOW MAN OF THE NIGHT.

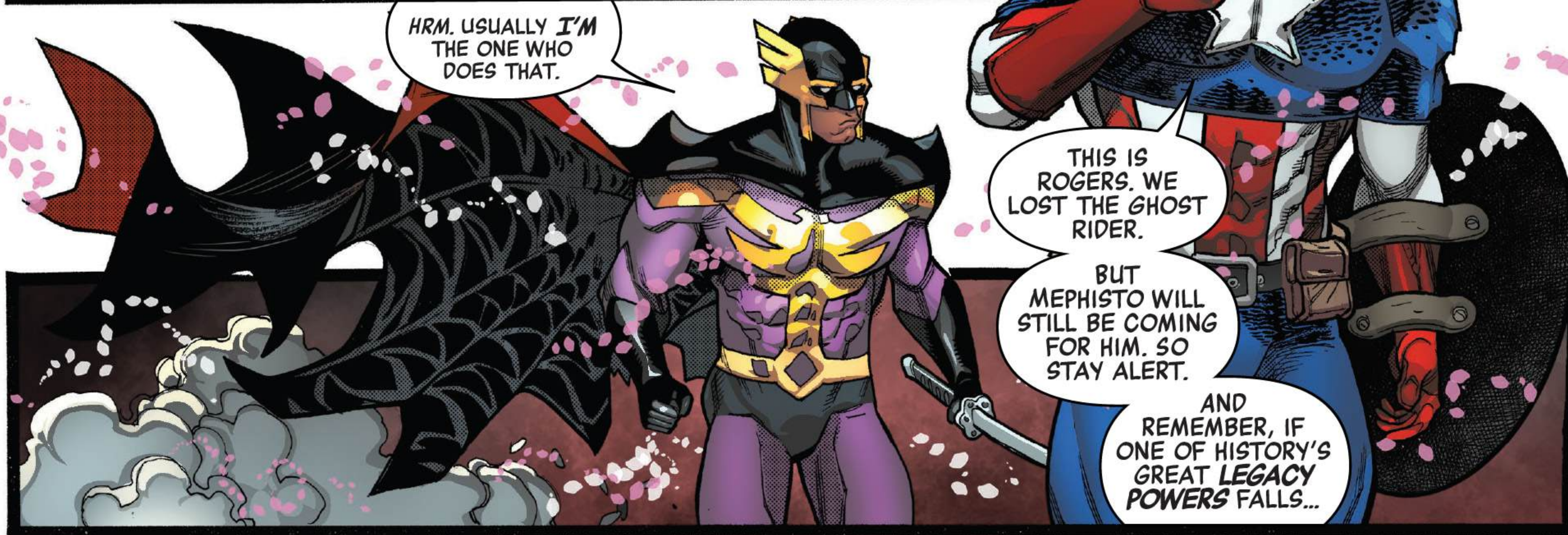


ON THE RIGHT PATH? SO HE MEANS THAT ALL THIS **BOUNCING AROUND** THROUGH TIME IS EVENTUALLY GOING TO LEAD US TO WHERE WE NEED TO BE?

I DON'T THINK HE'S TALKING ABOUT THAT, CAPTAIN. I THINK HE MEANS...



... WHERE'D HE GO?



HRM. USUALLY I'M THE ONE WHO DOES THAT.

THIS IS ROGERS. WE LOST THE GHOST RIDER.

BUT MEPHISTO WILL STILL BE COMING FOR HIM. SO STAY ALERT.

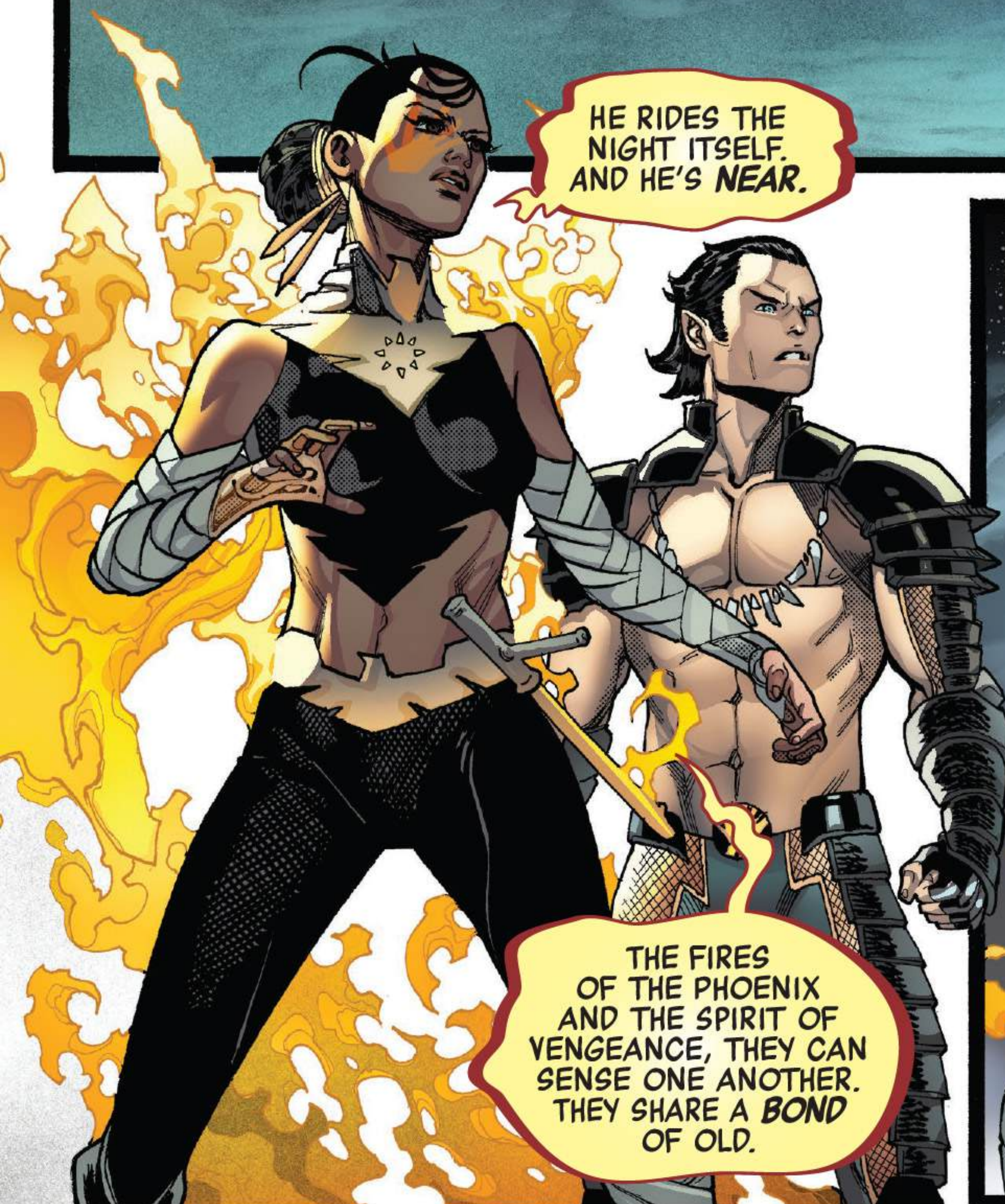
AND REMEMBER, IF ONE OF HISTORY'S GREAT **LEGACY POWERS** FALLS...



...THE EARTH
COULD WELL
BE NEXT.

HOW
EXACTLY IS HE A
GHOST RIDER IF HE
DOESN'T *RIDE*
ANYTHING?

HE RIDES THE
NIGHT ITSELF.
AND HE'S *NEAR*.



THE FIRES
OF THE PHOENIX
AND THE SPIRIT OF
VENGEANCE, THEY CAN
SENSE ONE ANOTHER.
THEY SHARE A *BOND*
OF OLD.



YES, WELL, THE *FIREHAG*
DOESN'T ALWAYS SHOW MUCH
RESPECT FOR BONDS OF OLD,
DOES SHE?

REALLY,
NAMOR? YOU'RE
STILL ANGRY ABOUT
THE *BATTLE FOR
THE PHOENIX*?

WASN'T
EXACTLY FAIR, WAS IT,
ECHO? IT CHOSE YOU
BECAUSE YOU'D *FALLEN*.
JUST SO IT COULD RAISE
YOU BACK UP AGAIN.

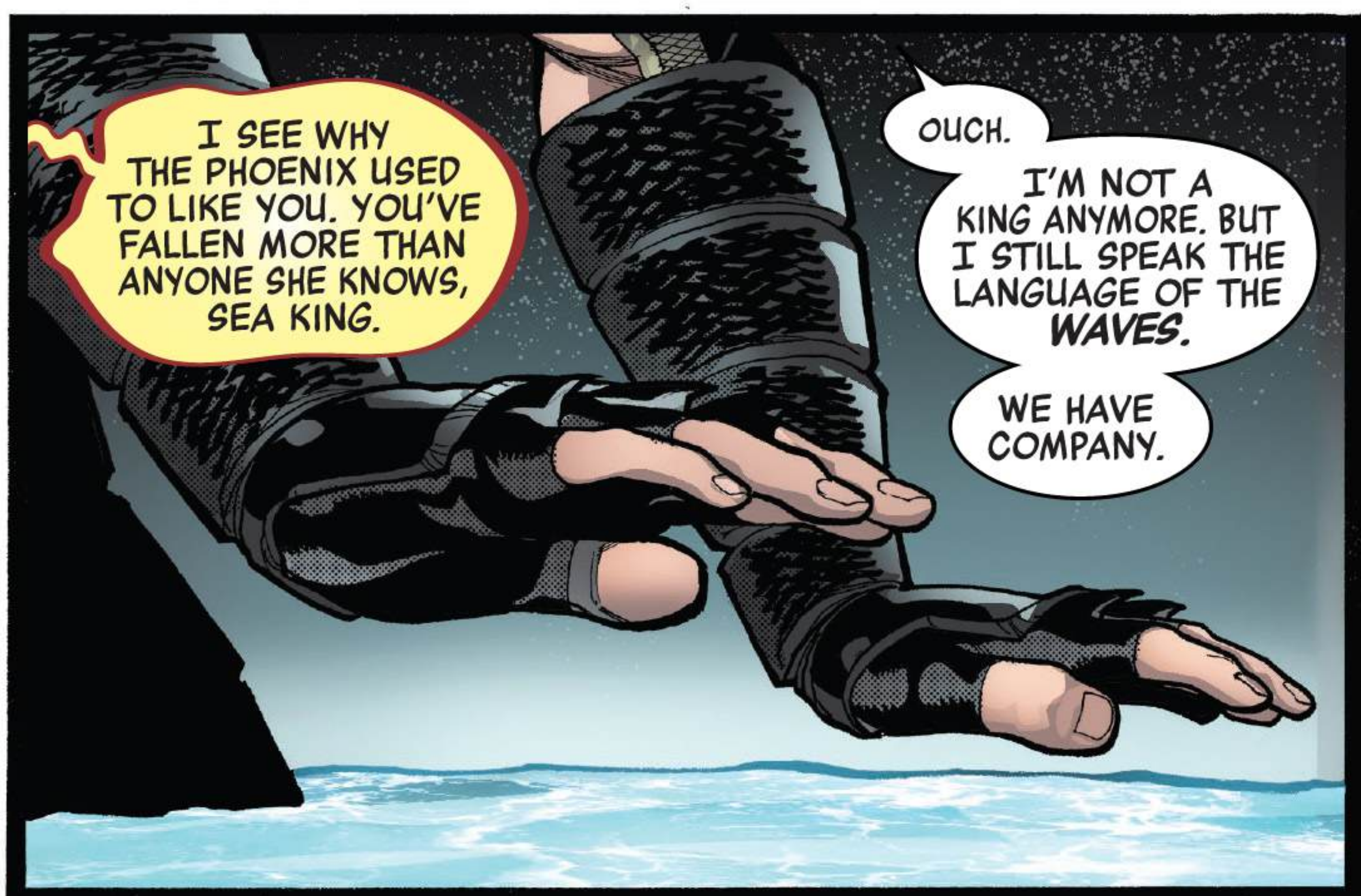


BY *FALLEN* YOU MEAN
YOU'D DAMN *NEAR*
KILLED ME.

AND I'LL REMIND YOU
THAT I RAISED *MYSELF*
BACK UP. AND LEFT YOU
CRAWLING.

ARE YOU
WAITING FOR ME
TO *APOLOGIZE*?
IT WAS A WAR.
I FIGHT WARS
TO *WIN*.

YET YOU
NEVER SEEM
TO *WIN ANY*,
DO YOU?



I SEE WHY
THE PHOENIX USED
TO LIKE YOU. YOU'VE
FALLEN MORE THAN
ANYONE SHE KNOWS,
SEA KING.

OUCH.

I'M NOT A
KING ANYMORE. BUT
I STILL SPEAK THE
LANGUAGE OF THE
WAVES.

WE HAVE
COMPANY.

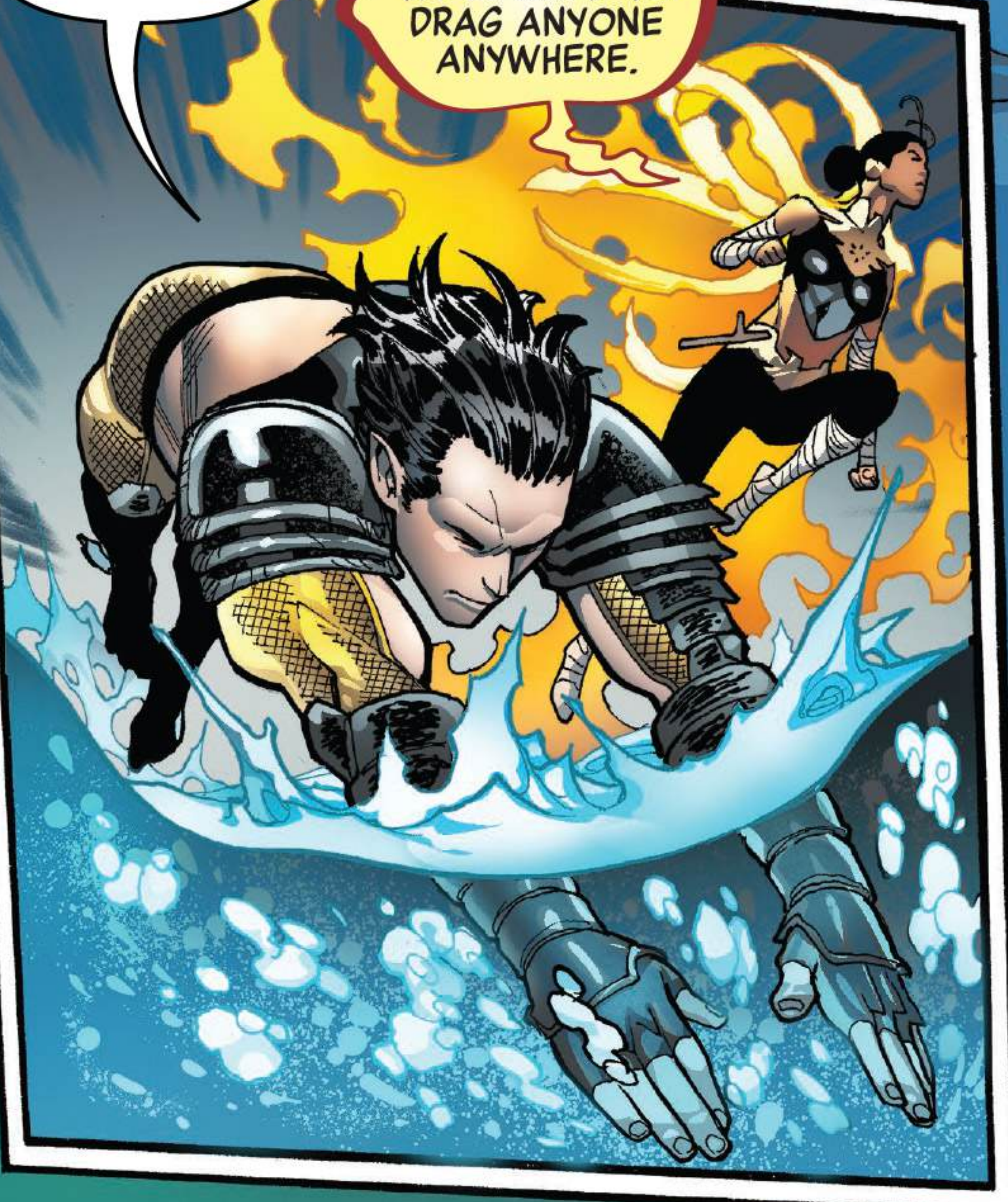


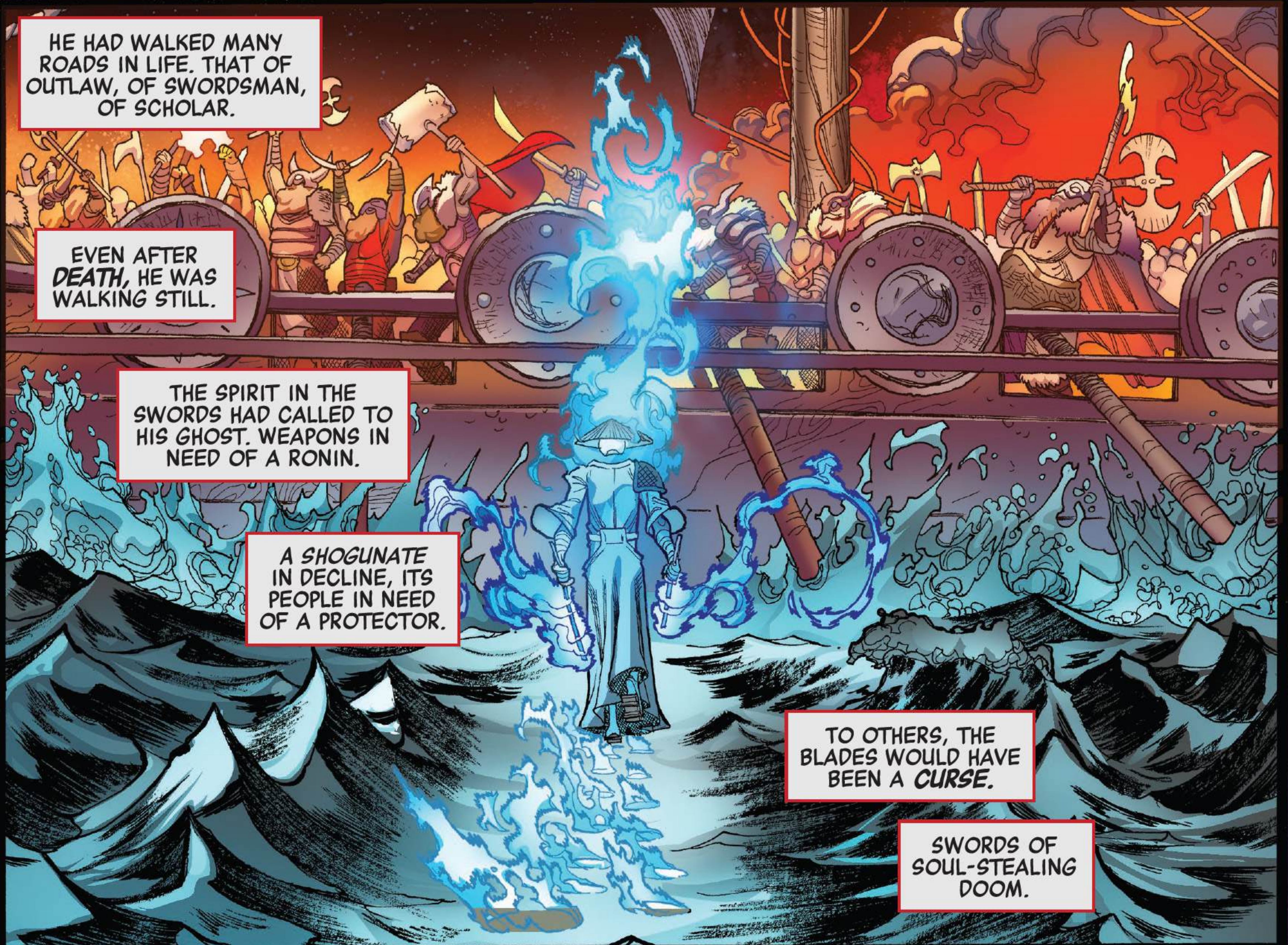
MORE OF
MEPHISTO'S
MINIONS, PLUCKED
FROM THE
TIMESTREAM.

YOU TAKE
HOWEVER MANY
YOU CAN AND DRAG
THEM SCREAMING
INTO THE SKY.

I'LL DRAG
THE REST INTO
THE *DEPTHS*.

NO, I
DON'T THINK
WE'LL NEED TO
DRAG ANYONE
ANYWHERE.





HE HAD WALKED MANY
ROADS IN LIFE. THAT OF
OUTLAW, OF SWORDSMAN,
OF SCHOLAR.

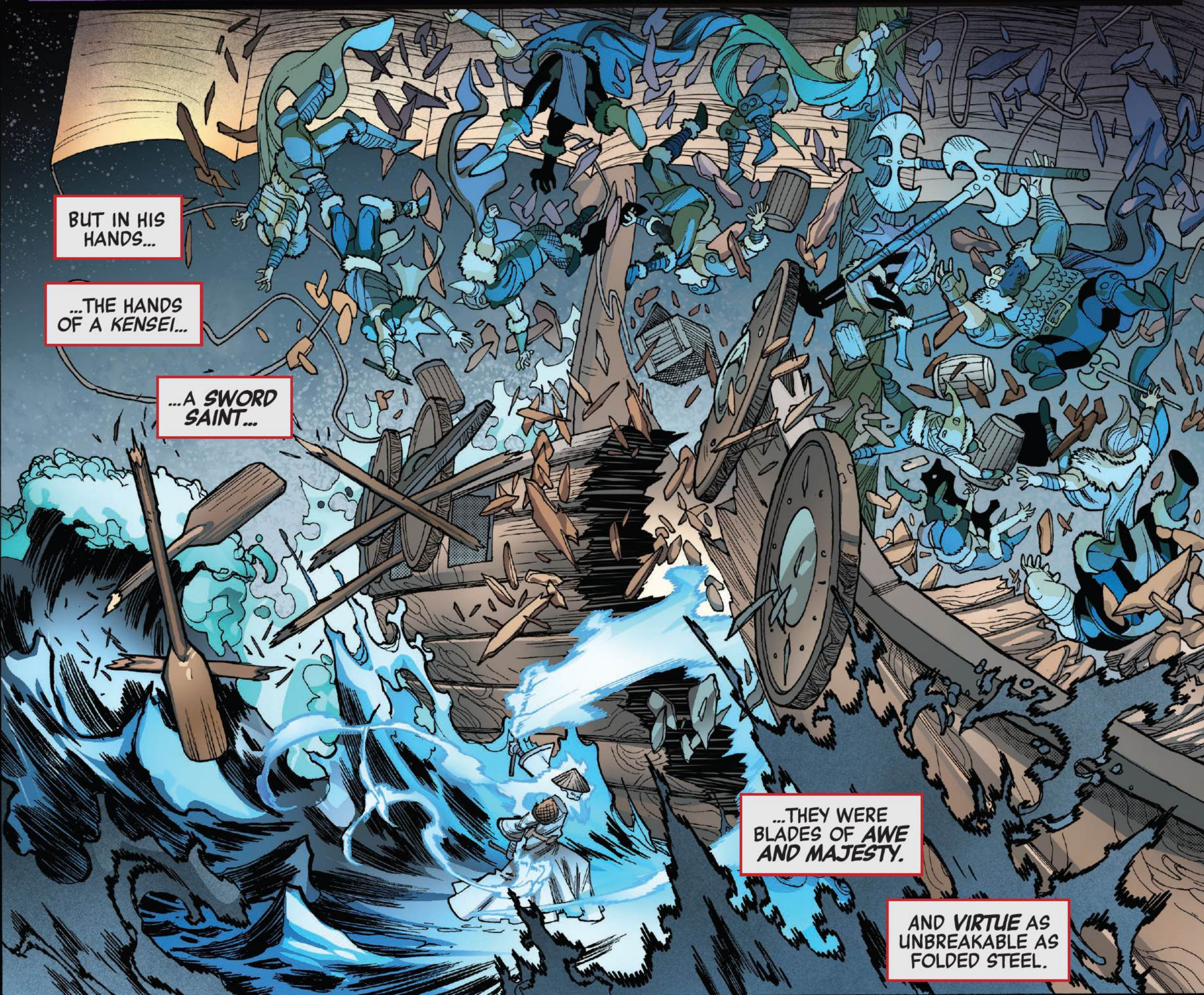
EVEN AFTER
DEATH, HE WAS
WALKING STILL.

THE SPIRIT IN THE
SWORDS HAD CALLED TO
HIS GHOST. WEAPONS IN
NEED OF A RONIN.

A **SHOGUNATE**
IN DECLINE, ITS
PEOPLE IN NEED
OF A PROTECTOR.

TO OTHERS, THE
BLADES WOULD HAVE
BEEN A **CURSE**.

SWORDS OF
SOUL-STEALING
DOOM.



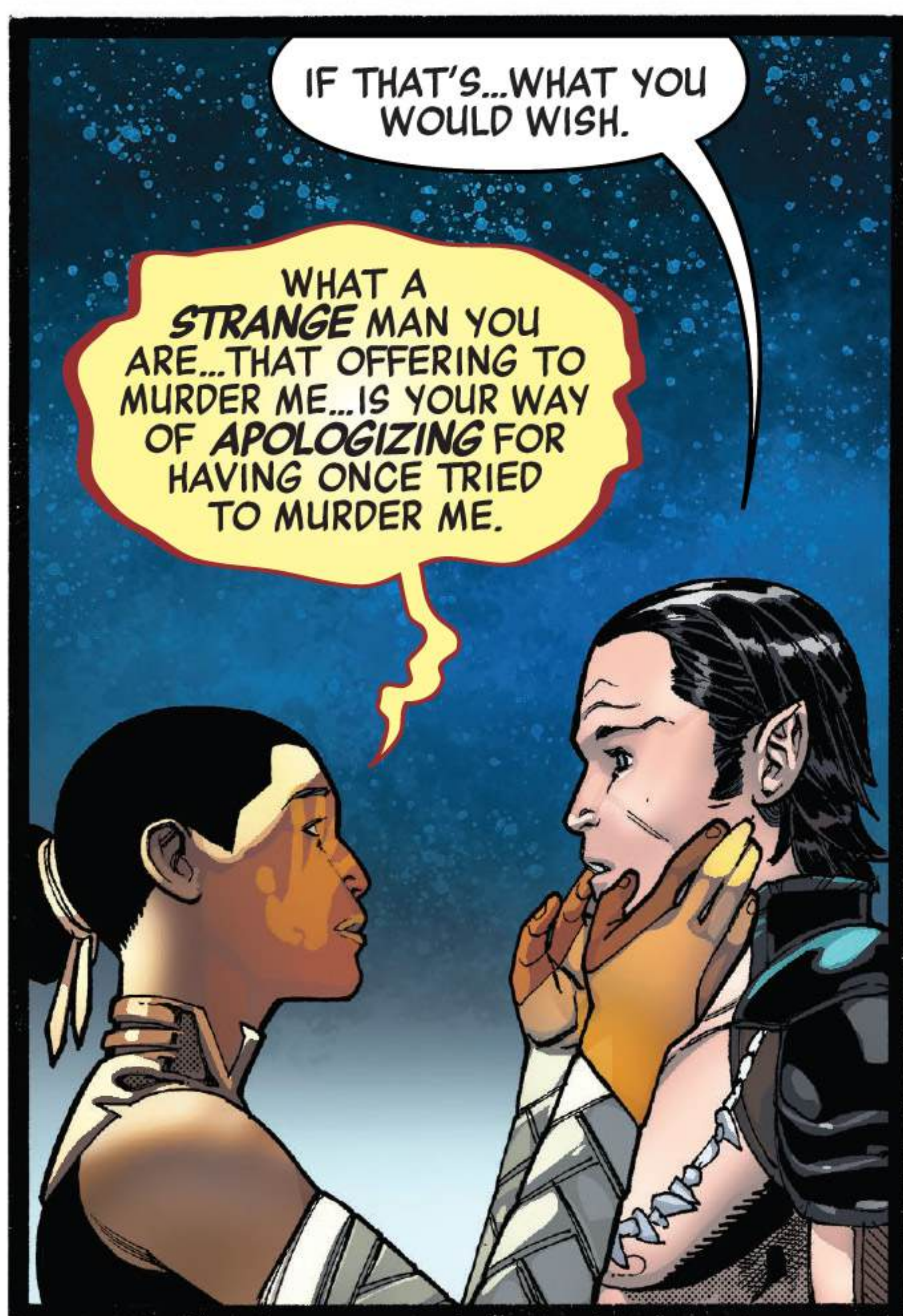
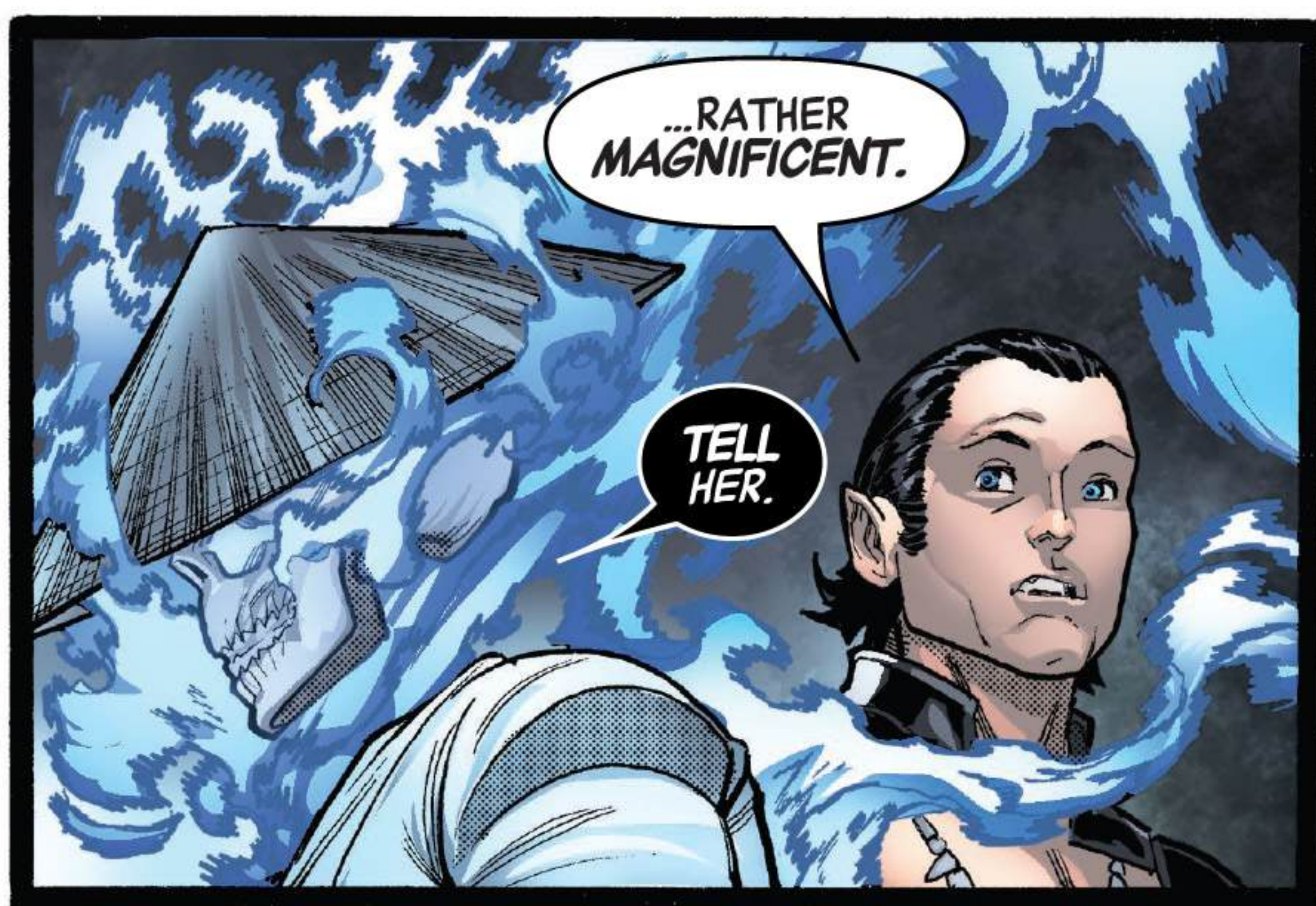
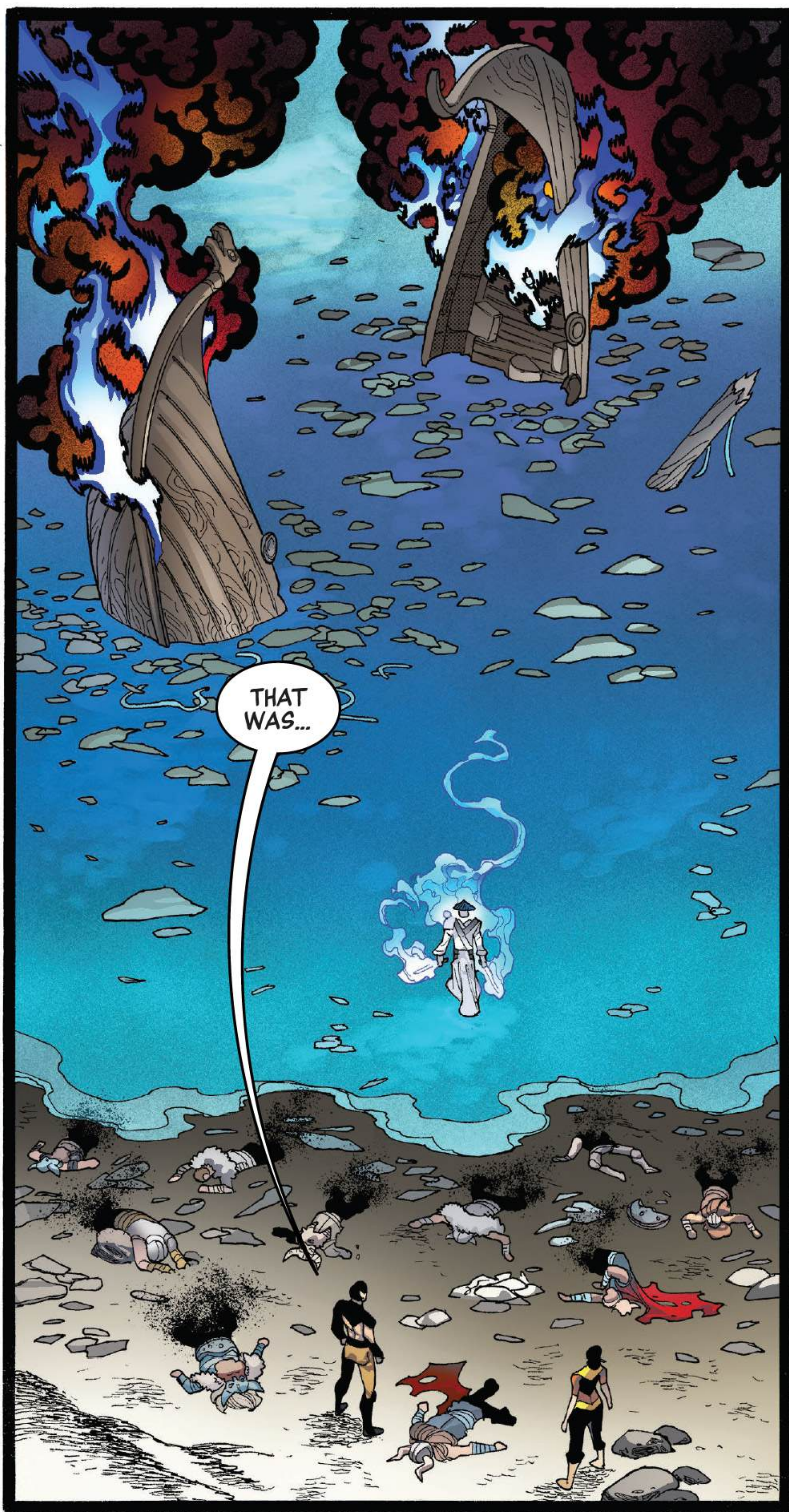
BUT IN HIS
HANDS...

...THE HANDS
OF A KENSEI...

...A **SWORD
SAINT**...

...THEY WERE
BLADES OF AWE
AND MAJESTY.

AND **VIRTUE** AS
UNBREAKABLE AS
FOLDED STEEL.





THIS FEELS REALLY DANGEROUS, RIGHT?

I MEAN, I THOUGHT YOU WERE NEVER SUPPOSED TO GO MUCKING ABOUT WITH LOCAL EVENTS WHEN YOU TIME-TRAVELED.



IT SURE FEELS LIKE WE'RE DOING AN AWFUL LOT OF MUCKING.

IT'LL BE FINE. I'VE MET MY PAST AND FUTURE SELVES *MANY* TIMES.

I DON'T RECOMMEND IT. WE USUALLY DETEST ONE ANOTHER.



RIGHT.

SHE'S DOING IT AGAIN, BOY! SHE'S STARING AT ME LIKE I'M THE LAST LEG OF MUTTON ON THE TABLE!

I'M TELLING YOU, JANE FOSTER COVETS THE HAMMER OF THOR! AS SURE AS I AM ODIN, THE WAY, THE WRATH AND THE--

DAMN YOU, BOY!



WHY'D YOU DO THAT?

IT WAS BOTHERING ME.

YOU SURE THE HAMMER IS WHAT'S BOTHERING YOU?



YOU KNOW WE CAN TALK ABOUT THIS PHOENIX STUFF WHENEVER YOU LIKE, RIGHT?

I HAVE... THOUGHTS.



LAST TIME WE CROSSED PATHS WITH THE PHOENIX FORCE, WHEN IT PULLED ME INTO THE HEART OF ITS POWER... I COULD TELL IT HAD FEELINGS FOR YOU, A SWIRL OF EMOTIONS I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND.*

LOVE, TINGED WITH RAGE... AND A PROFOUND SADNESS. NATURALLY, I ASSUMED YOU TWO... MUST'VE DATED.

BUT IF A PHOENIX AVATAR WAS SOMEHOW YOUR TRUE MOTHER... I SUPPOSE THAT WOULD MAKE SENSE TOO.

WHAT DO YOU THINK, ODINSON?

*SEE THE MIGHTY THOR (2015) #19. --TOM



I THINK, VALKYRIE, THAT WE'LL DISCUSS THE PHOENIX AS SOON AS YOU TELL ME ABOUT THE TEMPTATION YOU FACED AT THE HANDS OF MEPHISTO.

YOU'RE RIGHT. WE SHOULD PROBABLY JUST STICK TO THE MISSION.

I AM.

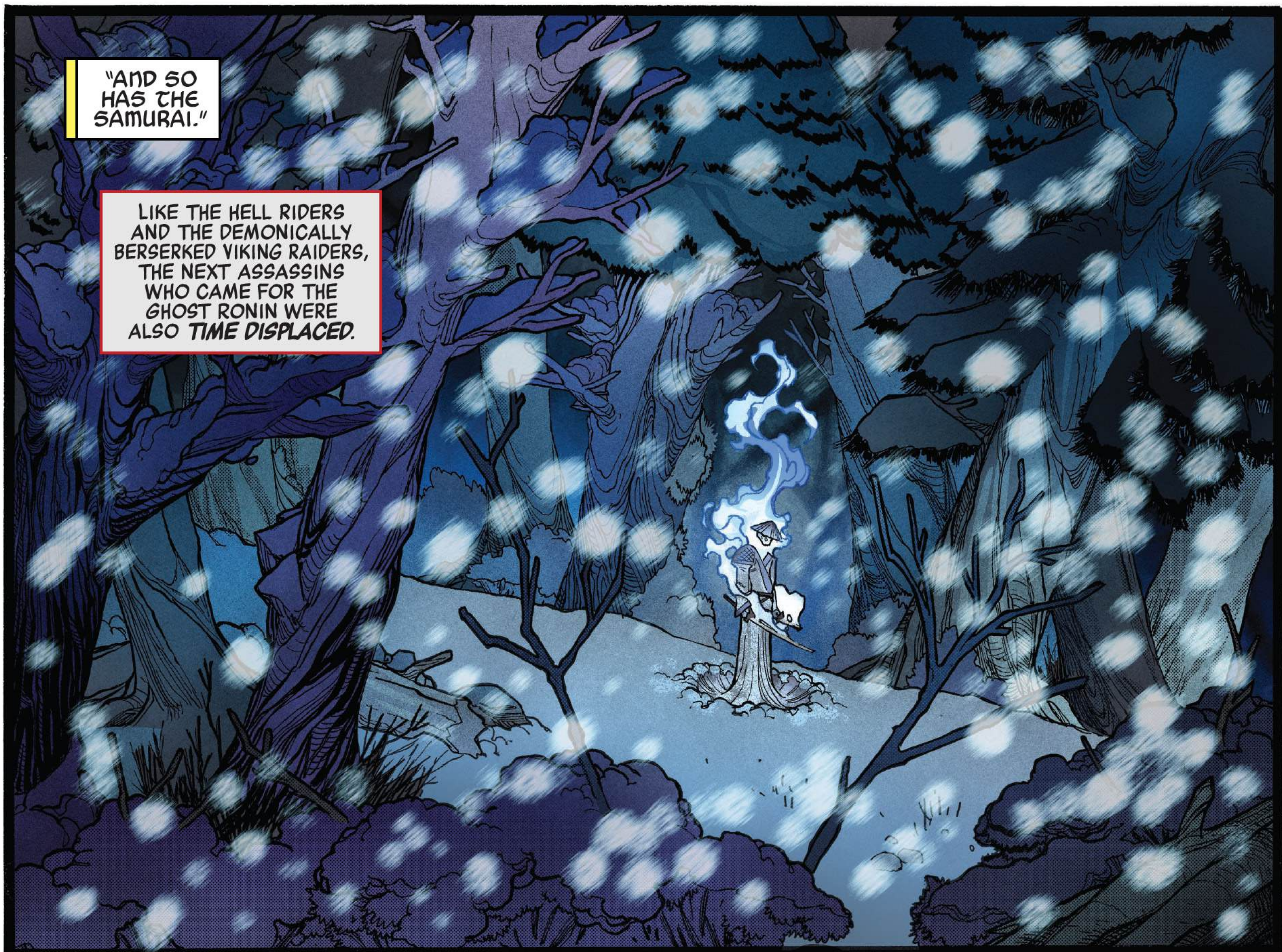


I AM LISTENING WITH THE STORMS, ALL ACROSS THIS LAND. NOTHING CAN HIDE FROM THE WIND.

SUMMON THE OTHERS, JANE FOSTER. TELL THEM I'VE FOUND OUR ENEMY.

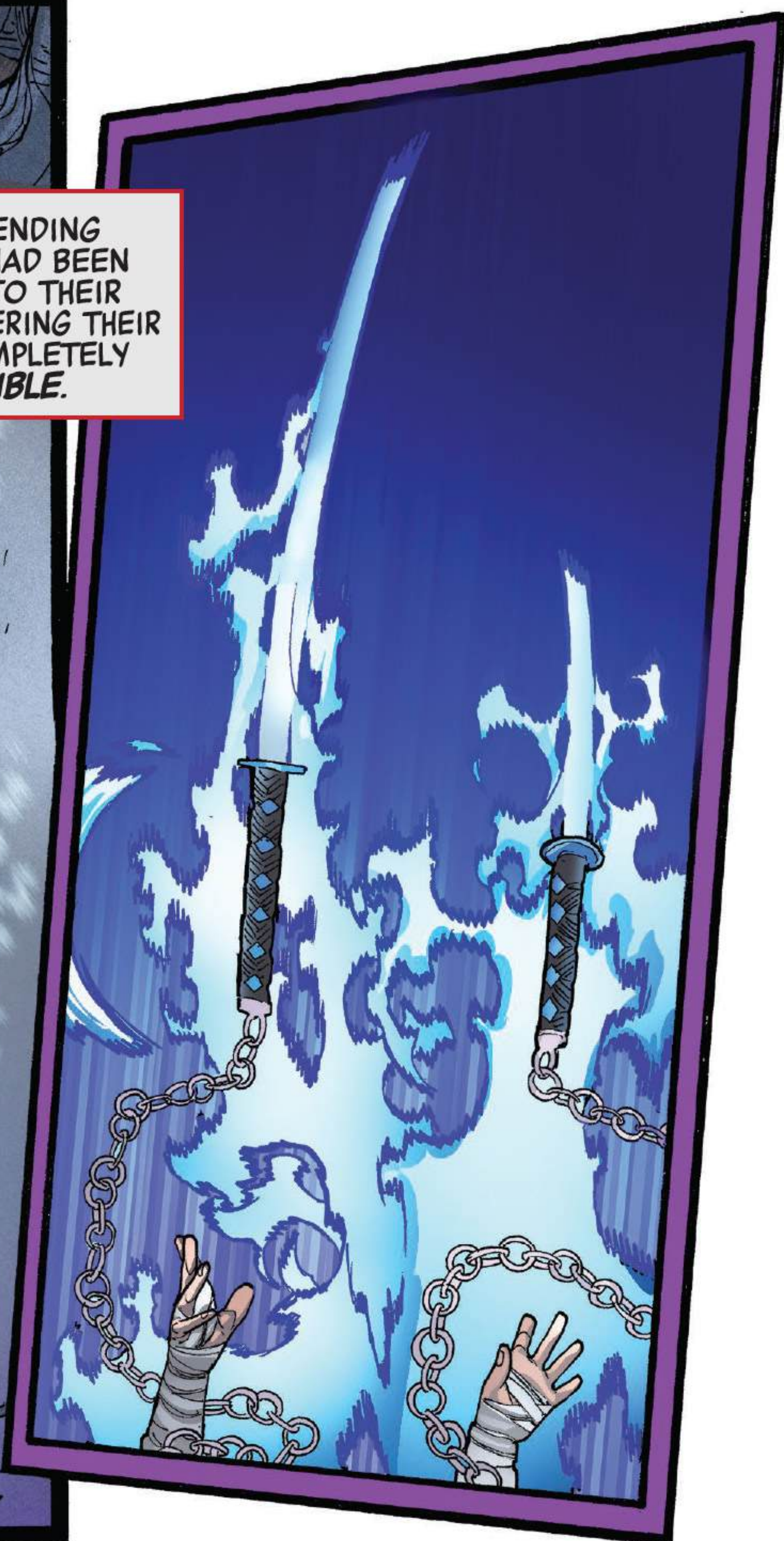
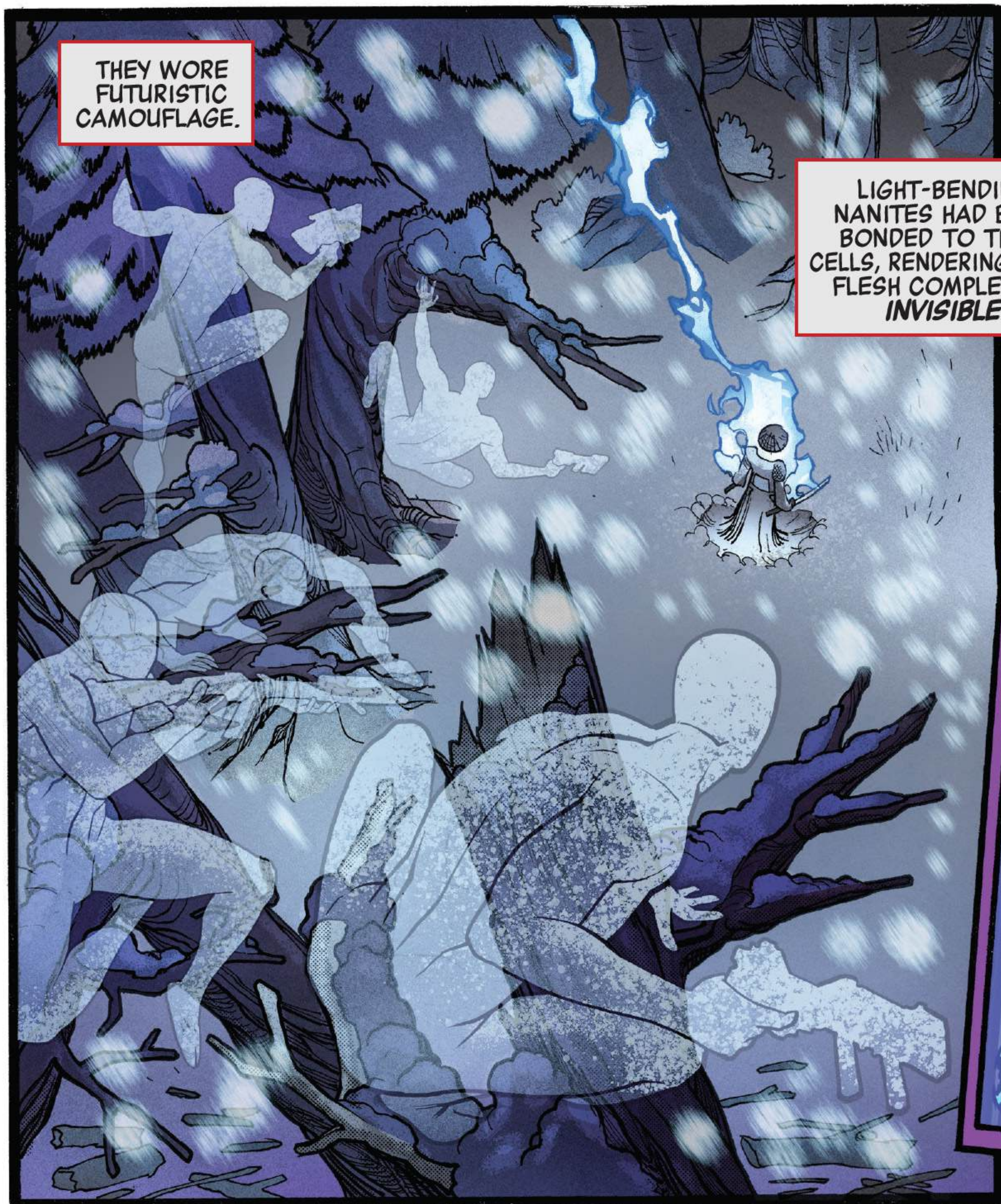
"AND SO
HAS THE
SAMURAI."

LIKE THE HELL RIDERS
AND THE DEMONICALLY
BERSERKED VIKING RAIDERS,
THE NEXT ASSASSINS
WHO CAME FOR THE
GHOST RONIN WERE
ALSO *TIME DISPLACED*.

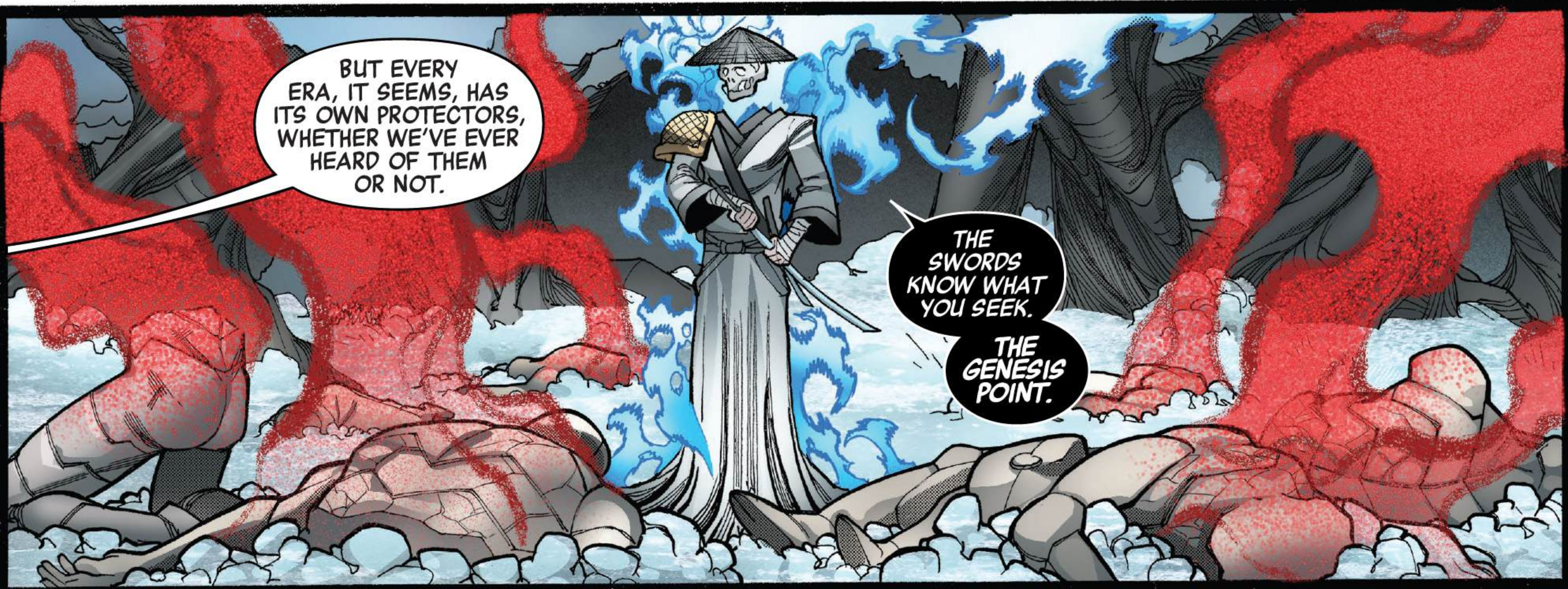


THEY WORE
FUTURISTIC
CAMOUFLAGE.

LIGHT-BENDING
NANITES HAD BEEN
BONDED TO THEIR
CELLS, RENDERING THEIR
FLESH COMPLETELY
INVISIBLE.









"THE BIRTH ERA
FOR A WORLD
OF HEROES."

"A PREHISTORIC
FULCRUM THAT
MUST BE DEFENDED
AT ALL COSTS."

CAN THE
SWORDS TELL US
HOW TO GET THERE?
BECAUSE EVERY TIME
WE TRY, WE WIND UP
CHASING MEPHISTO
TO A DIFFERENT
TIME PERIOD.

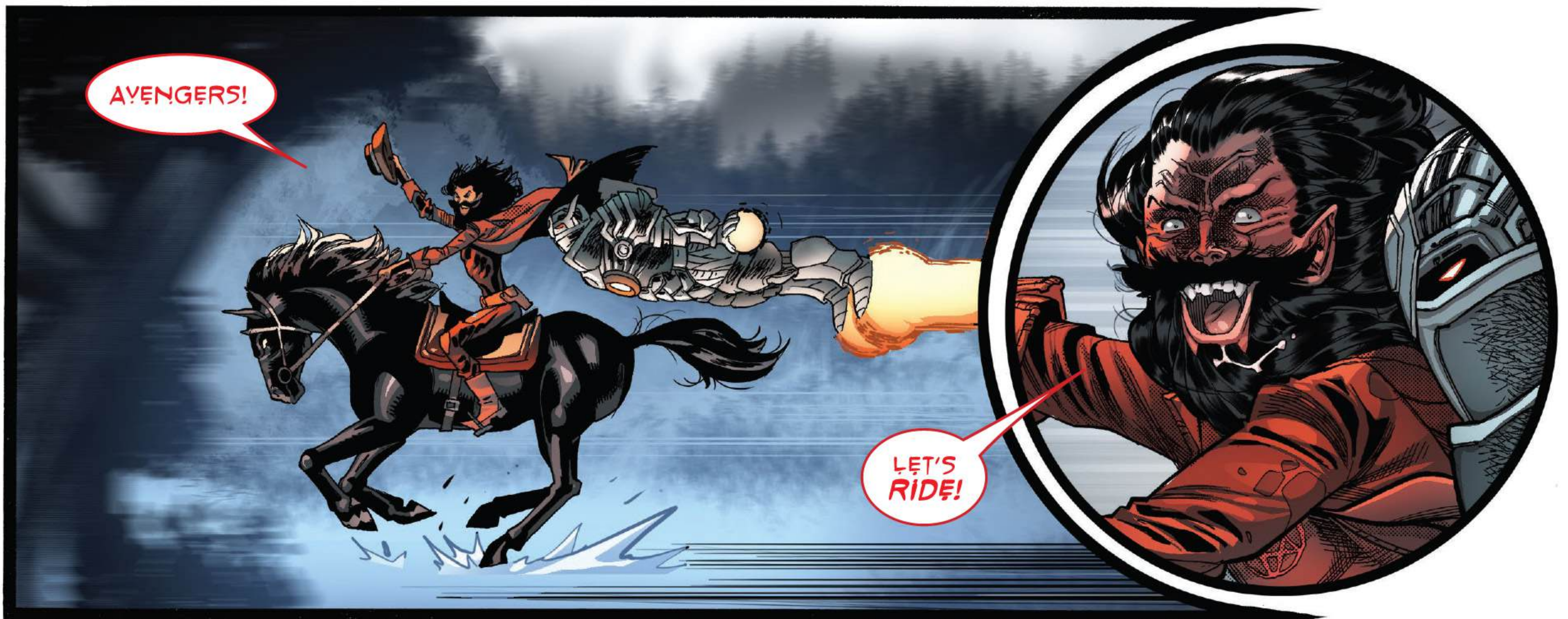
FOLLOW
THE FIRE.

FOR
EVERYTHING,
OH AVENGERS,
IS ON FIRE.

YOU JUST
HAVE TO BE
WILLING TO LET
IT BURN.

IS HE STARING
AT ME? HARD
TO TELL WHEN HE
DOESN'T HAVE EYES.
WHY IS HE STARING
AT ME?

YEAH,
STARBRAND,
I'M PRETTY
SURE HE'S--





BUT BECAUSE
THERE IS NO MORE
NEED FOR OUR
KIND.

I PROMISE
YOU...ONE WAY OR
THE OTHER...YOUR
LONG WALK WILL
END.

A TRUE
RONIN WALKS FOR
WISDOM, AS LONG
AS IT TAKES.



OUR JOURNEYS MAKE
US STRONGER, MAN
OF THE NIGHT.

FOR THE
FIGHT YET
TO COME.

THE WAR
FOR THE
ALL AND THE
ALWAYS.

I HOPE
YOU'RE RIGHT,
SAMURAI.



HOPE
IS FOR THE
LIVING.

WHILE
I...



"...I AM
NOTHING MORE
THAN A GHOST."

**59 HISTORY'S MIGHTIEST HEROES PART THREE
THE WILD WEST'S WILDEST OUTLAW AVENGERS IN...
"DEATH RIDES THE SKY RAILS"**



THE TALE WAS TOLD IN *WHISPERS*, BY MEN MORE ACCUSTOMED TO GRUNTS OR HOLLERS, IN TEXAS BUNKHOUSES AND MISSOURI HOOSEGOWS...

...AROUND CAMPFIRES ON THE MOONLIT, TALLGRASS SEA OF THE KANSAS PRAIRIE, OVER DAKOTA TERRITORY POKER TABLES IN THOSE MOST SORDID OF HOURS BETWIXT SATURDAY NIGHT AND SUNDAY MORNING.

THE TALE WENT THAT IF A FELLA FOUND HIMSELF A *CROSSROADS* SITUATED NEAR A HANGING TREE...

...AND WAS TO RIDE OUT THERE JUST A SHADE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF *MIDNIGHT*...

...THREE DAYS AFTER SOME HORSE THIEF OR CLAIM JUMPER OR OTHER SUCH TRIFLING, NO-ACCOUNT POLECAT HAD BEEN STRUNG UP BY THEIR GODFORSAKEN NECK...

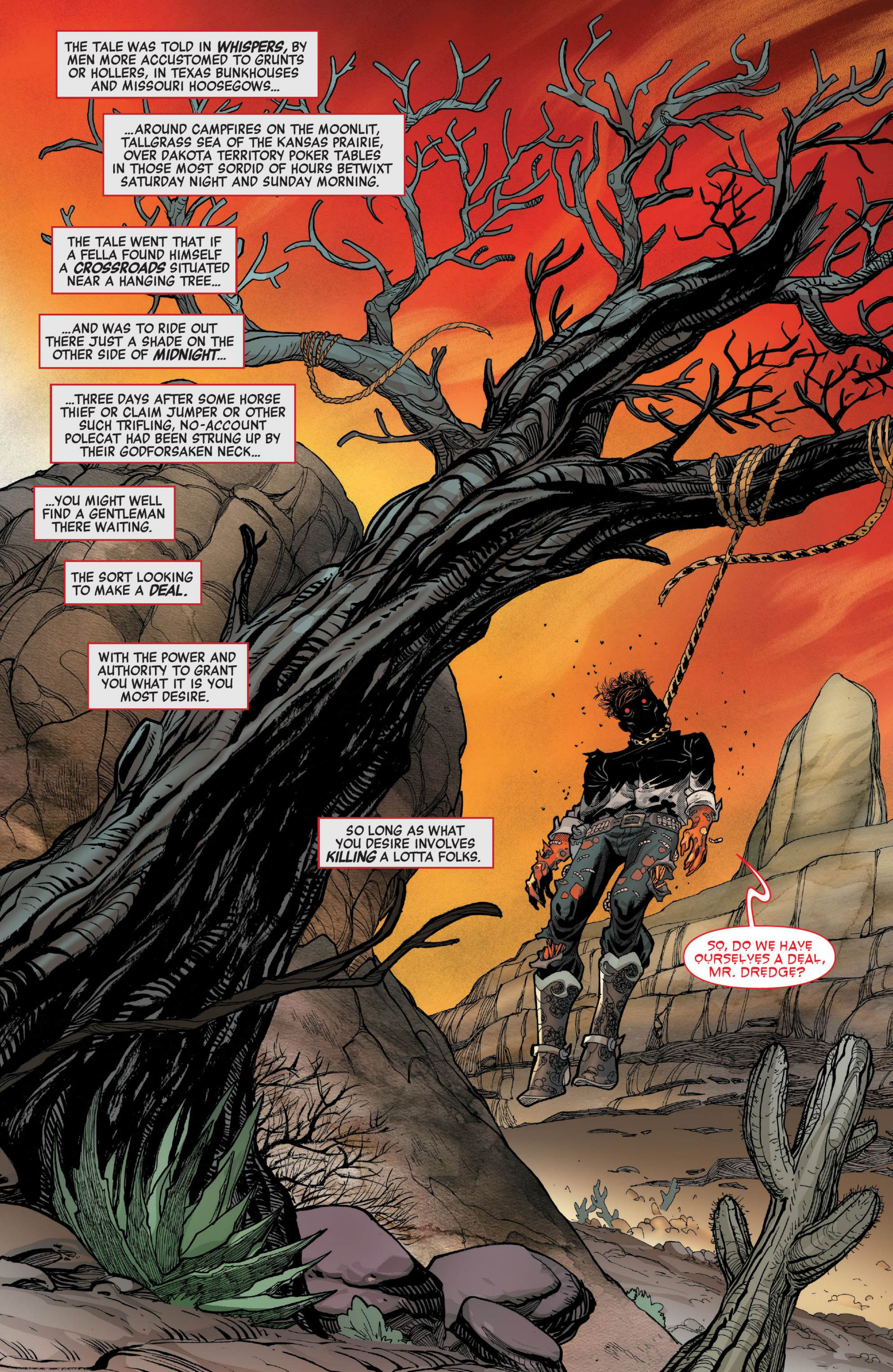
...YOU MIGHT WELL FIND A GENTLEMAN THERE WAITING.

THE SORT LOOKING TO MAKE A *DEAL*.

WITH THE POWER AND AUTHORITY TO GRANT YOU WHAT IT IS YOU MOST DESIRE.

SO LONG AS WHAT YOU DESIRE INVOLVES *KILLING A LOTTA FOLKS*.

SO, DO WE HAVE OURSELVES A DEAL, MR. DREDGE?





YOU'RE SAYING YOU CAN MAKE ME THE FASTEST GUNSLINGER IN ALL ARIZONA? RIGHT HERE, TONIGHT? AND IT WON'T COST ME ONE RED CENT?

YOUR GUN HAND WILL BE AS SWIFT AS A STRIKING RATTLESNAKE AND DECIDEDLY MORE DEADLY. I'VE TAKEN THE LIBERTY OF DRAWING UP THE PAPERS.

I AIN'T MUCH FOR LITERATING.



THEN THAT SHOULD SPEED THINGS ALONG QUITE NICELY. JUST MAKE YOUR X AND THE DEAL IS DONE.



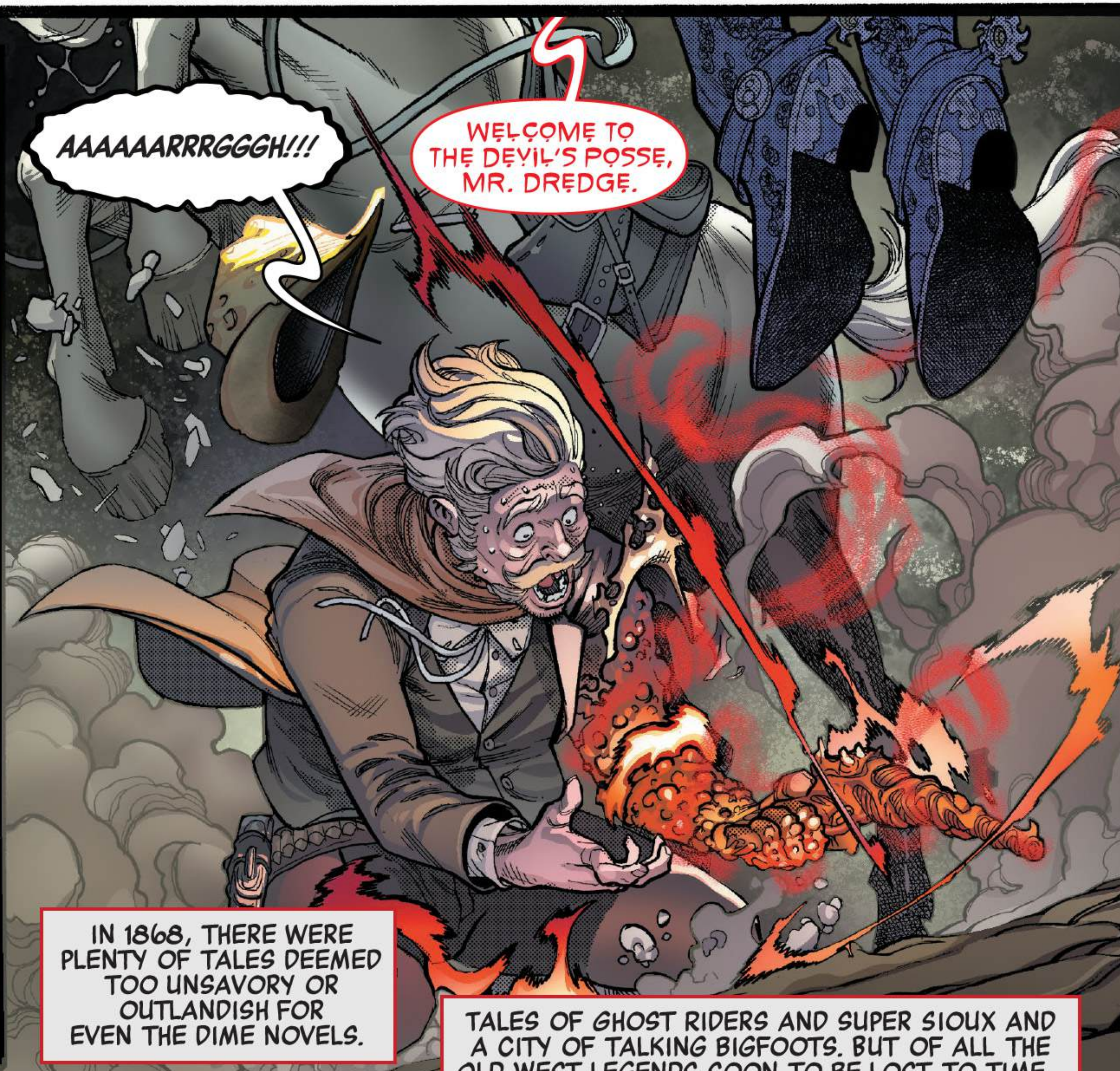
I DON'T... FEEL NO DIFFERENT. NO FASTER.

AH, BUT THE SECRET IS IN THE TOOLS. TRY MY PISTOL.



IT'S KILLED MORE MEN THAN THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT.

AND IT IS ALWAYS HUNGRY FOR ONE MORE.



AAAAAARRRGH!!!

WELCOME TO THE DEVIL'S POSSE, MR. DREDGE.

IN 1868, THERE WERE PLENTY OF TALES DEEMED TOO UNSAVORY OR OUTLANDISH FOR EVEN THE DIME NOVELS.

TALES OF GHOST RIDERS AND SUPER SIOUX AND A CITY OF TALKING BIGFOOTS. BUT OF ALL THE OLD WEST LEGENDS SOON TO BE LOST TO TIME...

...NONE BLAZED A TRAIL
QUITE LIKE **RENO PHOENIX**
AND **THE STARBRAND KID**.

RENO...

THAT
WHAT I THINK
IT IS?

SURE AS
SHOOT IS, KID.
SHI'AR SKY TRAIN,
PACKED WITH A
FRESH LOAD OF
CARGO.

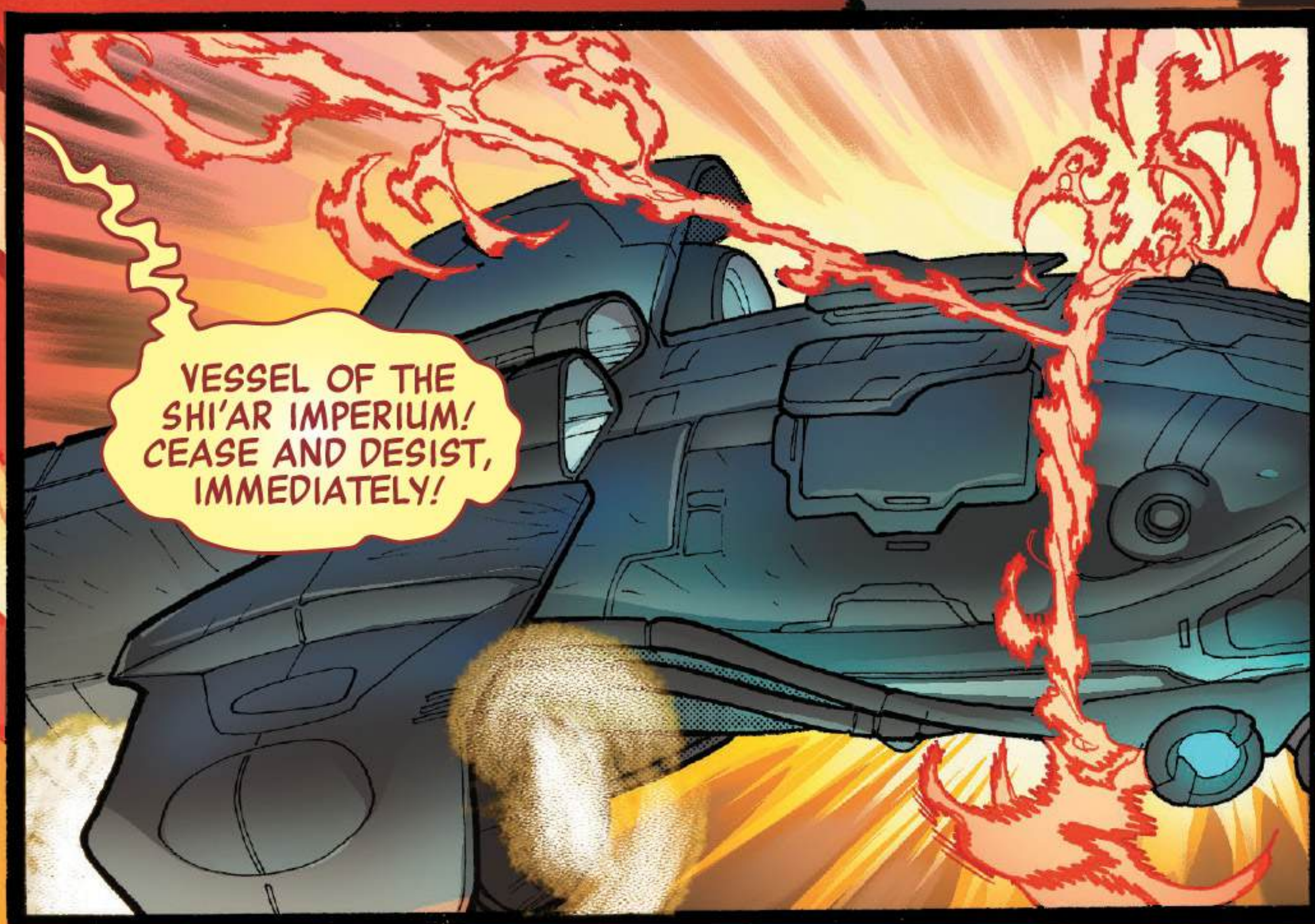
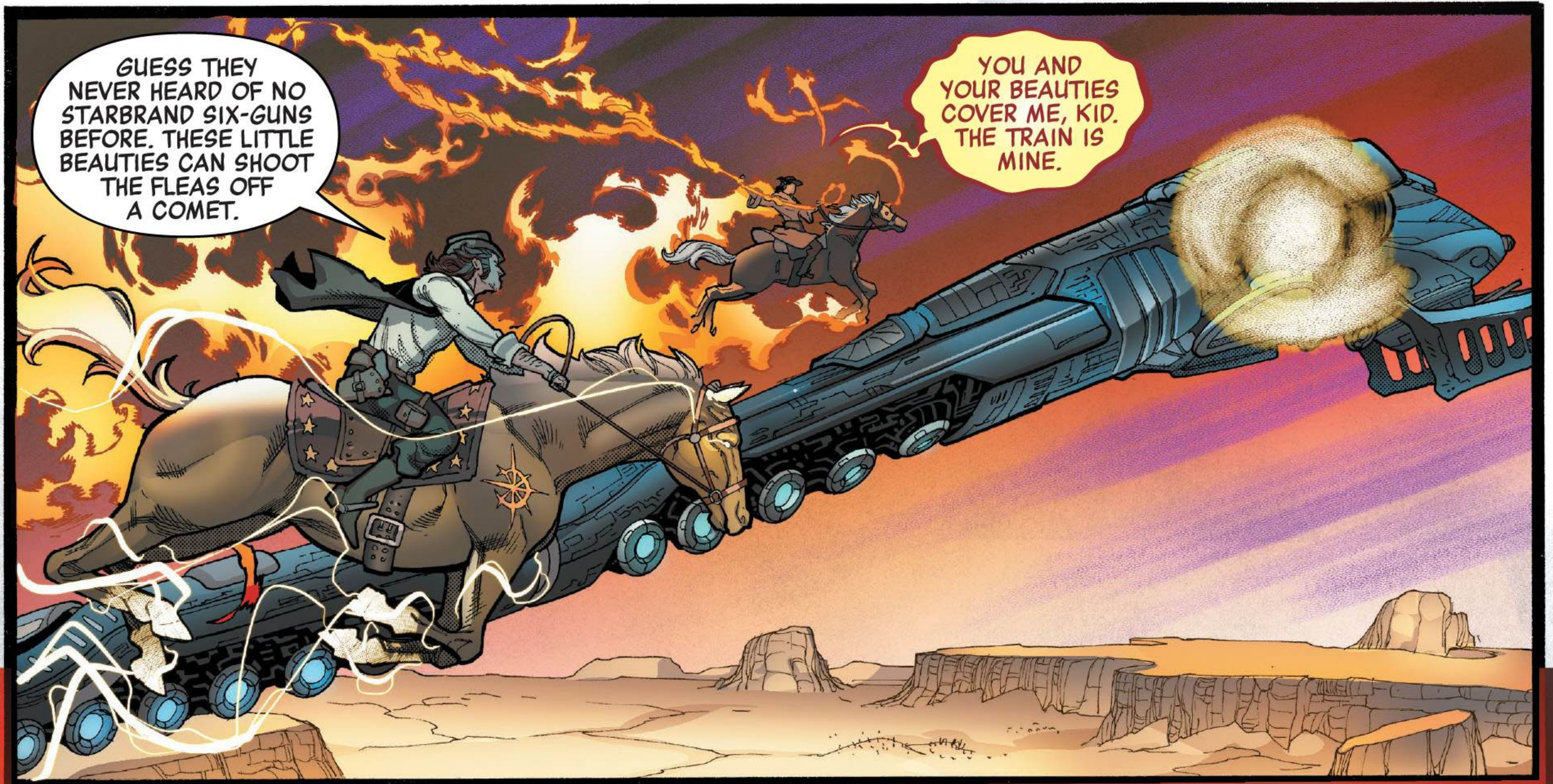
SORRY
BUNCH A BIRD-
HEADED ROBBER
BARONS.

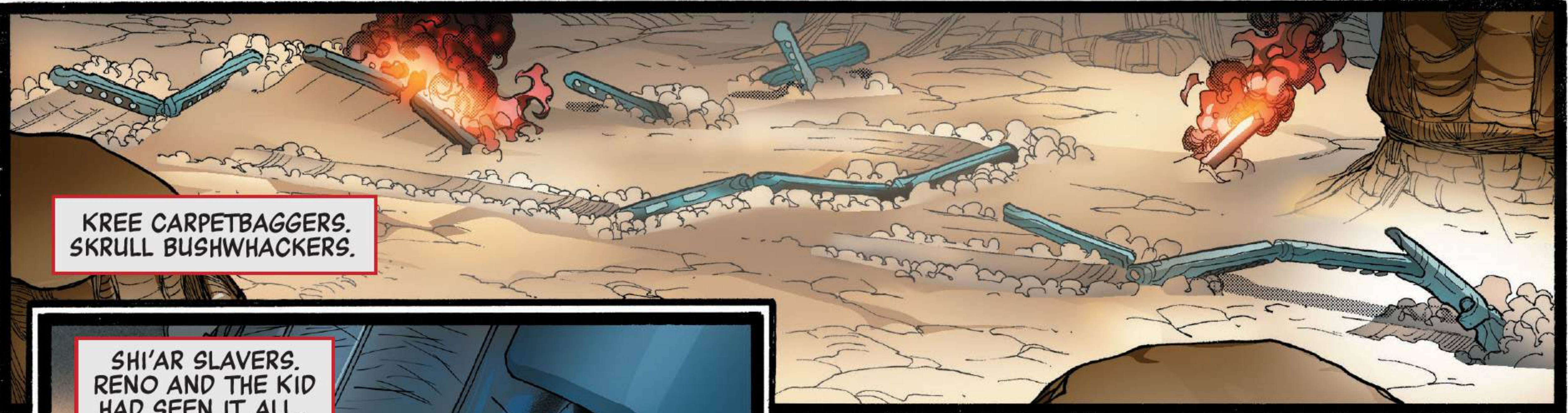
THEY GOT
THREE **WARBIRDS**
WAITING IN ORBIT, READY
TO ESCORT THEM ALL
THE WAY BACK TO
THEIR BIG SPACE
PLANTATION.

MUST BE FIFTY MILES
FROM HERE TO THE EDGE
OF SPACE. RECKON THOSE
WARBIRDS FIGURE THEY'RE
OUT OF YOUR RANGE.

I SEE
'EM.

RECKON
THEY DO.





KREE CARPETBAGGERS.
SKRULL BUSHWHACKERS.



SHI'AR SLAVERS.
RENO AND THE KID
HAD SEEN IT ALL.

IT SEEMED DEATH WAS
ALWAYS RIDING THE SKY
RAILS, COMING FOR OUR
BACKWOODS, PODUNK
PLANET FROM ALL CORNERS
OF THE GALACTIC FRONTIER.

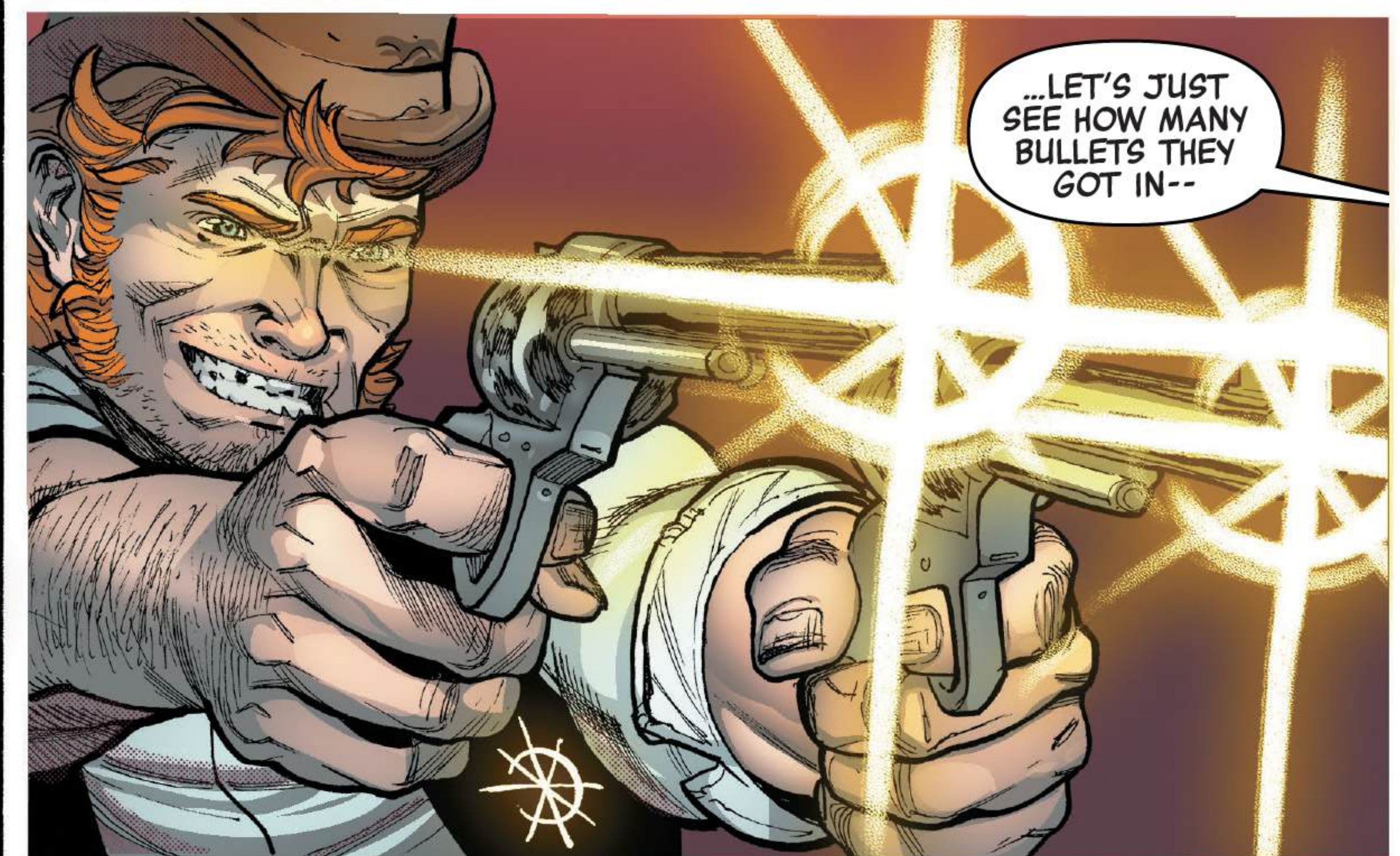
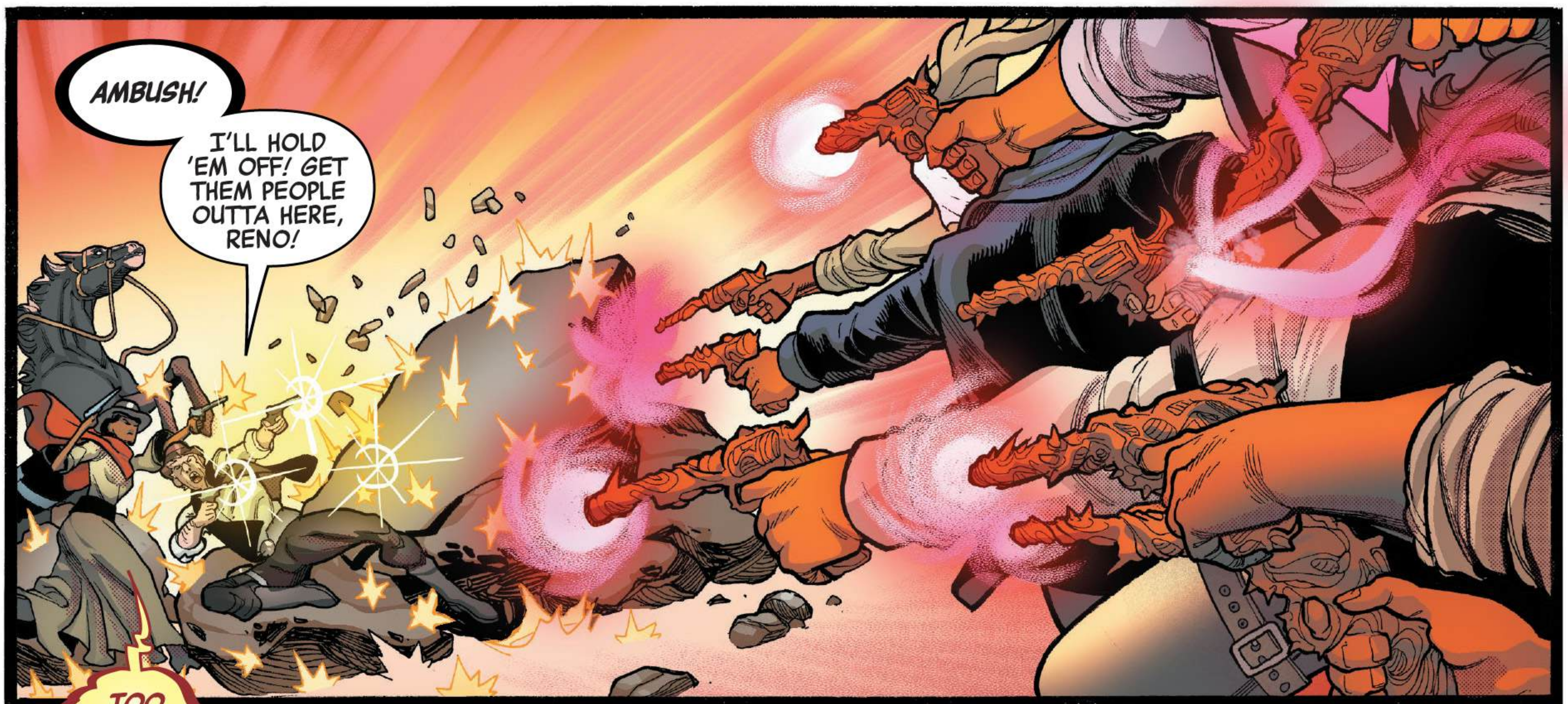
EVERYBODY,
THIS WAY.
YOU'RE FREE
TO GO.

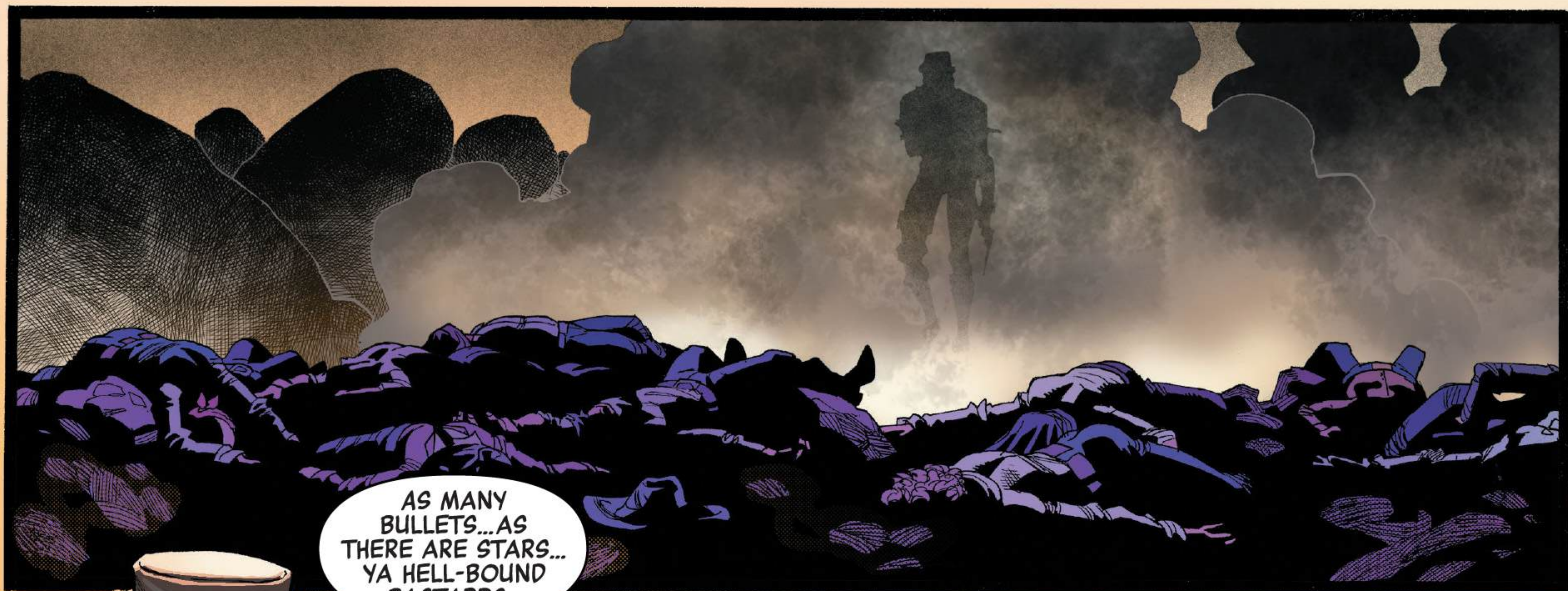


BUT SOMETIMES
THE WORST RUSTLERS
AND HELLBENDERS...



...WERE
HOMEGROWN.





AS MANY
BULLETS...AS
THERE ARE STARS...
YA HELL-BOUND
BASTARDS.



YEAH, AND
JUST HOW MANY
BULLETS YOU
FIGURE IT'LL
TAKE...



...TO
BRING YOU
DOWN?

I'D GUESS
ABOUT THIS
MANY!



BANG
BANG
BANG



HIYAH!
FASTER,
RED!



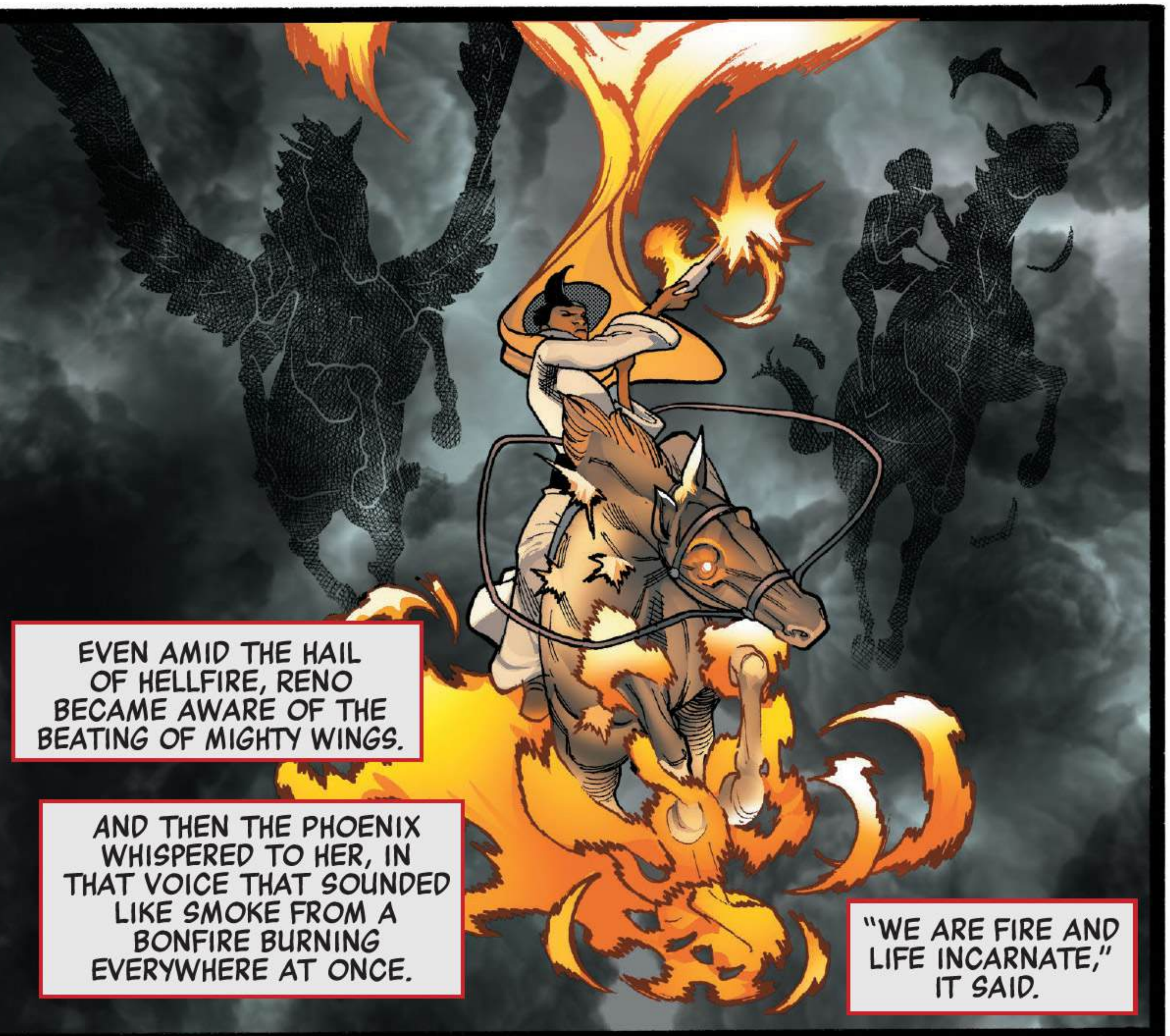


GAGH! TOO MANY OF THEM! AND THEM GUNS OF THEIRS ARE HELL-FORGED!

THESE ARE THE DEVIL'S OWN GUNHANDS!

BUT WE'LL SET THE WHOLE BLAMED SKY ON FIRE IF WE GOT TO!

RIDE ON, RED! WE FIGHT TO THE LAST DAMN EMBER!



EVEN AMID THE HAIL OF HELLFIRE, RENO BECAME AWARE OF THE BEATING OF MIGHTY WINGS.

AND THEN THE PHOENIX WHISPERED TO HER, IN THAT VOICE THAT SOUNDED LIKE SMOKE FROM A BONFIRE BURNING EVERYWHERE AT ONCE.

"WE ARE FIRE AND LIFE INCARNATE," IT SAID.



"WE ARE THE PHOENIX. AND WE PERSEVERE."

WHO THE HELL?



THERE WAS NO TIME FOR WORDS,
BUT NONE WERE NEEDED.

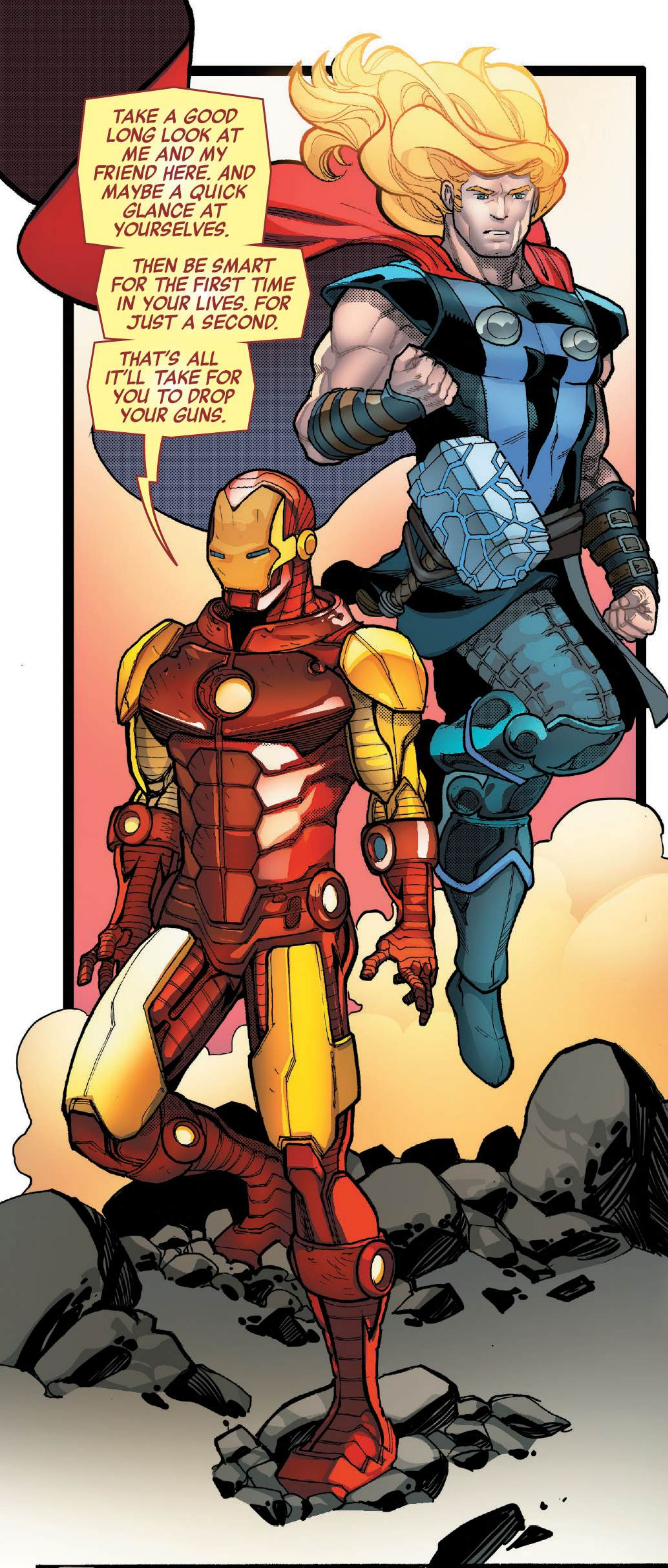
PHOENIX SPOKE TO
PHOENIX THE WAY
FLAME SPEAKS TO FLAME.



BY BURNING
BRIGHTER TOGETHER.

AND CONSUMING
EVERYTHING THAT
WAS NOT THEM.





TAKE A GOOD LONG LOOK AT ME AND MY FRIEND HERE. AND MAYBE A QUICK GLANCE AT YOURSELVES.

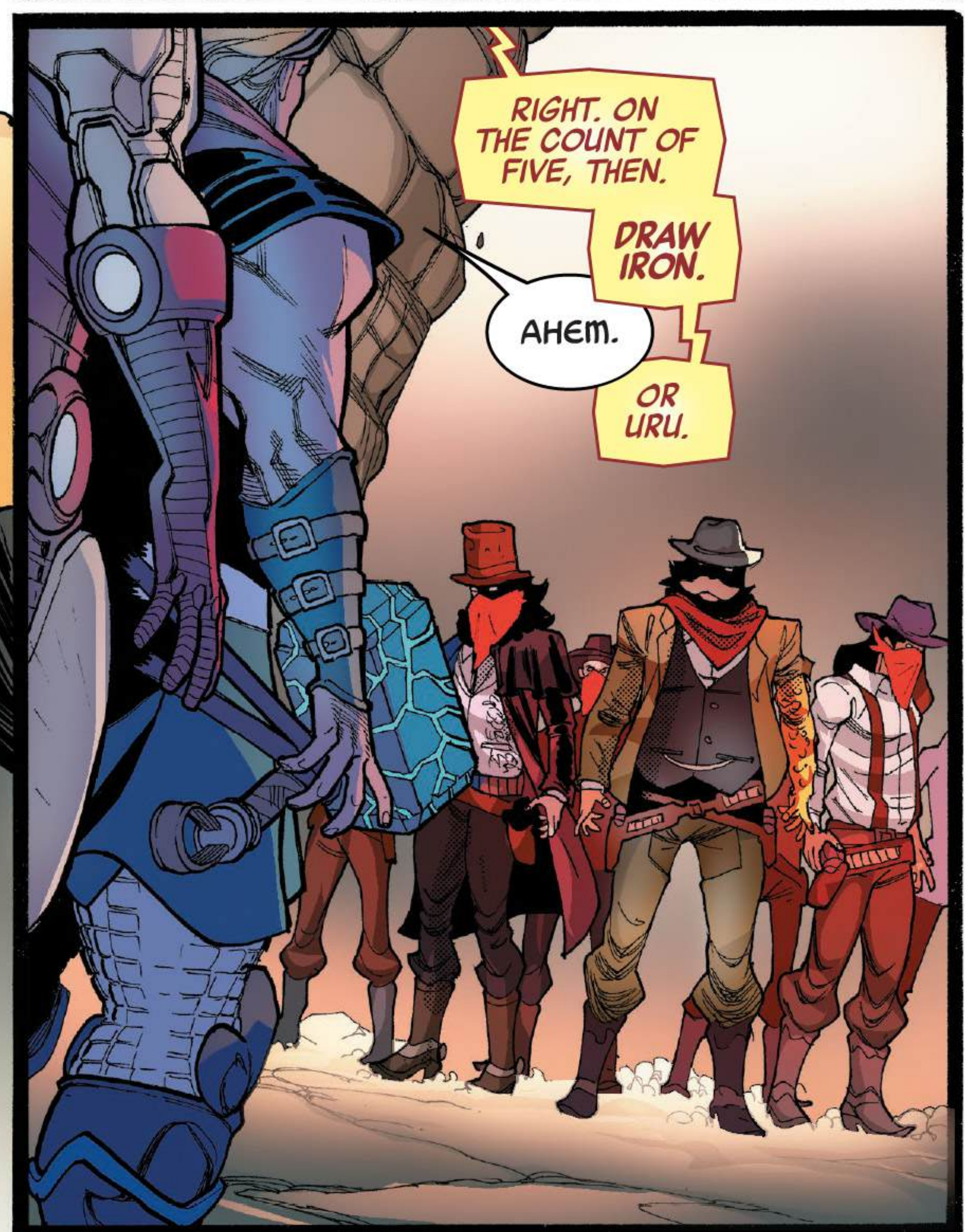
THEN BE SMART FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YOUR LIVES. FOR JUST A SECOND.

THAT'S ALL IT'LL TAKE FOR YOU TO DROP YOUR GUNS.



YEAH, FIGURED THAT'D BE TOO HARD FOR YA.

THIS IS THEIR ERA, STARK. THEY ARE WARRIORS OF THE AMERICAN WEST. WE MUST BE HONORABLE AND FACE THEM ON THEIR TERMS.



RIGHT. ON THE COUNT OF FIVE, THEN.

DRAW IRON.

AHEM.

OR URU.



ONE... TWO...



CLOSE
ENOUGH.



STARBRAND, WE'RE
HERE TO HELP. YOU
AND YOUR PARTNER
ARE UNDER ATTACK
BY A MONSTER
CALLED MEPHISTO.

HE'S TRYING TO
TAKE DOWN HISTORY'S
GREATEST HEROES,
ONE ERA AT A--



THIS GUY
AGAIN.

I THINK IT'S
ABOUT TIME
HE AND I HAD
A CHAT.



ALMOST...



NO! HE
SHOT THE
ROPES!

RENO CARLOTTA
KNEW WHAT IT
WAS LIKE TO FALL.

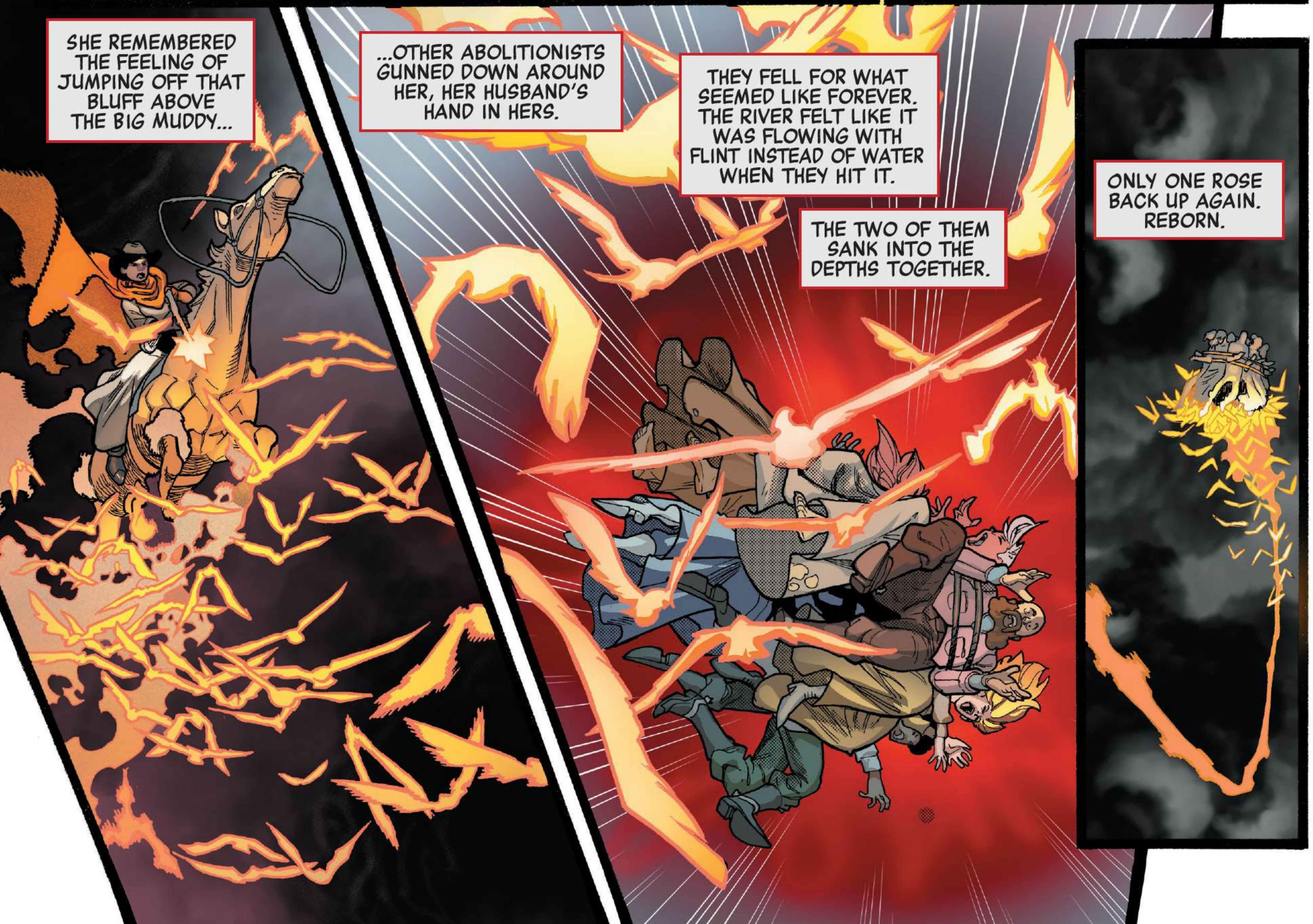
SHE REMEMBERED
THE FEELING OF
JUMPING OFF THAT
BLUFF ABOVE
THE BIG MUDDY...

...OTHER ABOLITIONISTS
GUNNED DOWN AROUND
HER, HER HUSBAND'S
HAND IN HER.

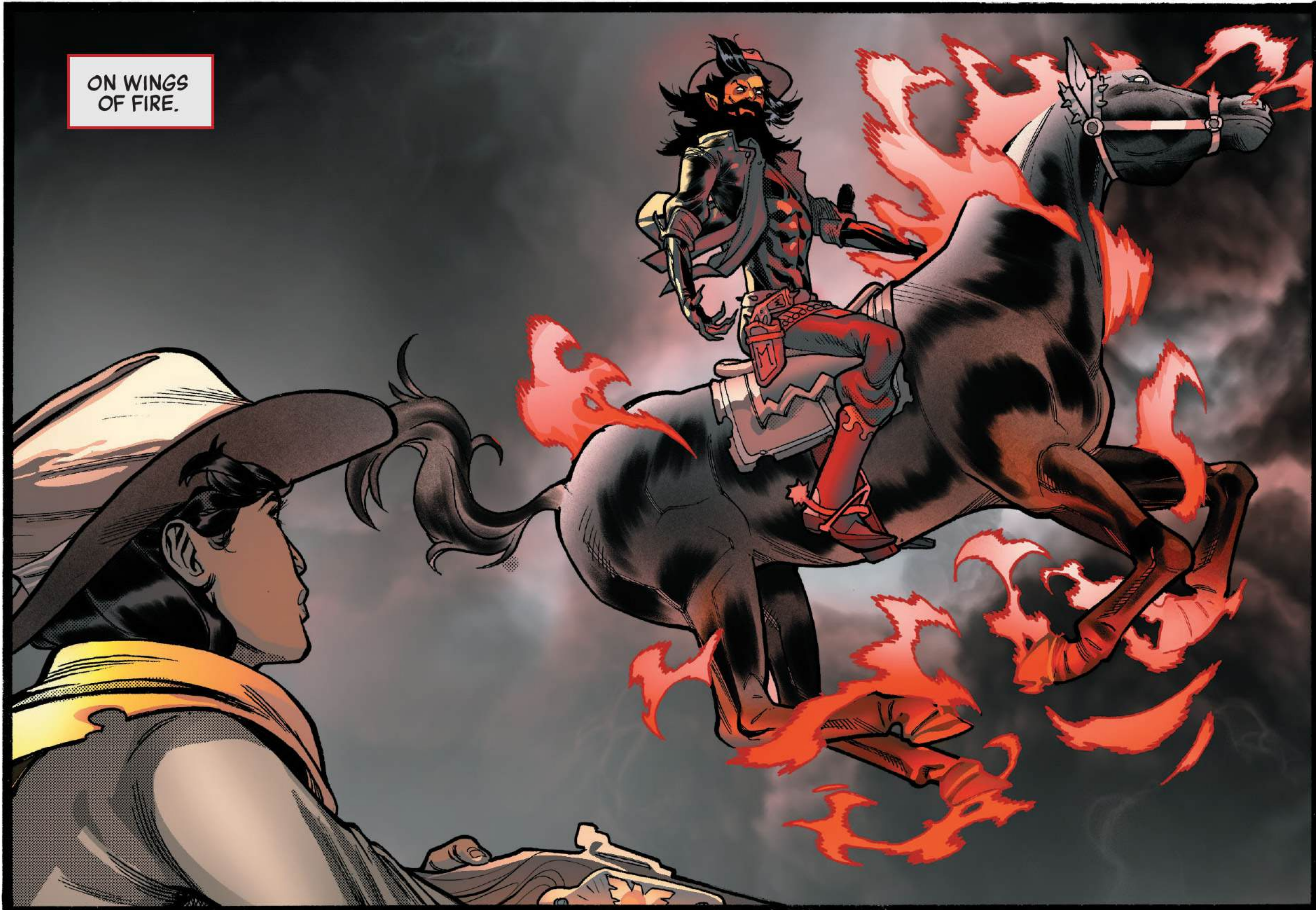
THEY FELL FOR WHAT
SEEMED LIKE FOREVER.
THE RIVER FELT LIKE IT
WAS FLOWING WITH
FLINT INSTEAD OF WATER
WHEN THEY HIT IT.

THE TWO OF THEM
SANK INTO THE
DEPTHS TOGETHER.

ONLY ONE ROSE
BACK UP AGAIN.
REBORN.



ON WINGS
OF FIRE.



WHAT IF I
COULD GIVE YOU
BACK WHAT YOU
LOST IN THAT
RIVER?

WOULD YOU
TRADE IN YOUR
GUNS FOR A CHANCE
TO FEEL LOVED
AGAIN?



OTHERWISE, YOU
CAN KEEP FIGHTING,
SAVE THE WORLD A FEW
MORE TIMES, MAYBE EVEN
TELL YOURSELF YOU'RE
MAKING A REAL
DIFFERENCE IN
YOUR TIME.

BUT SOONER
OR LATER, YOU'LL
BE DEAD, AND THE
MOMENT YOU'RE IN THE
GROUND, BEFORE THE
WORMS HAVE EVEN
GOT TO YOU
GOOD...

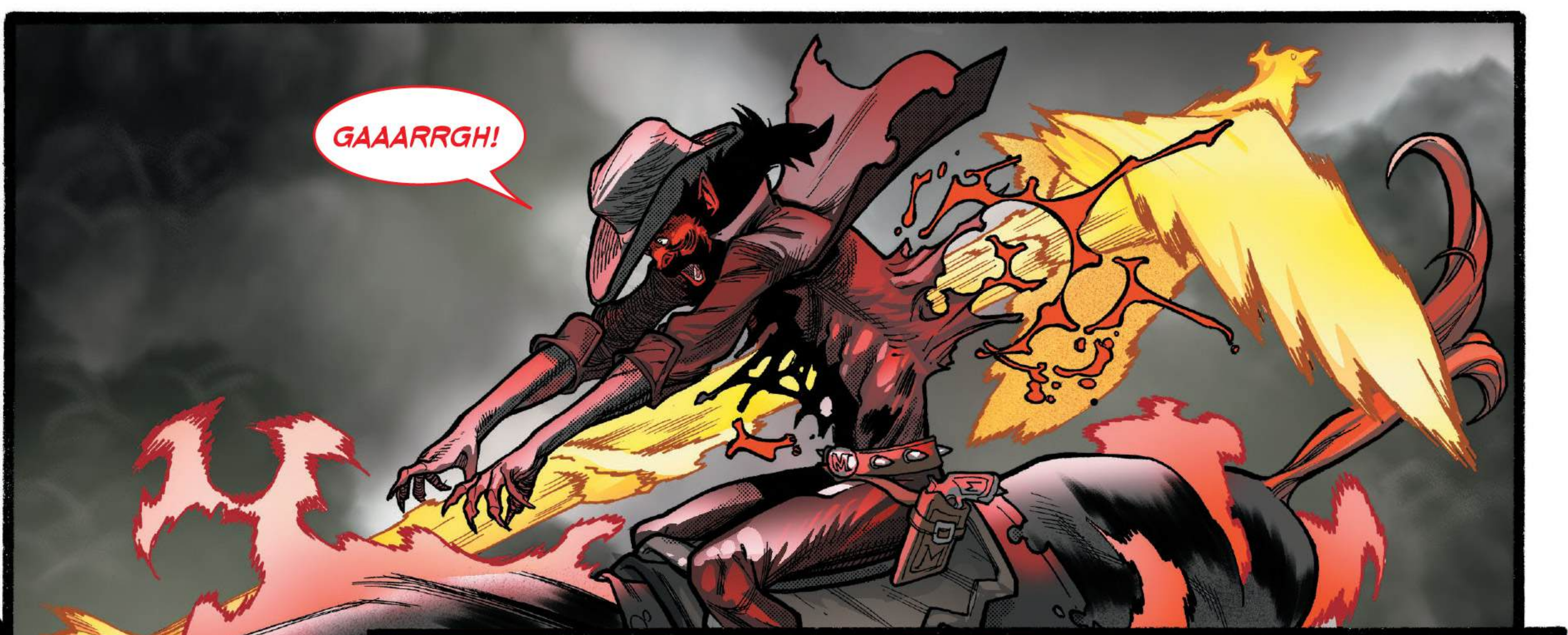


...THE WORLD
WILL ALREADY
HAVE **FORGOTTEN**
YOUR NAME.

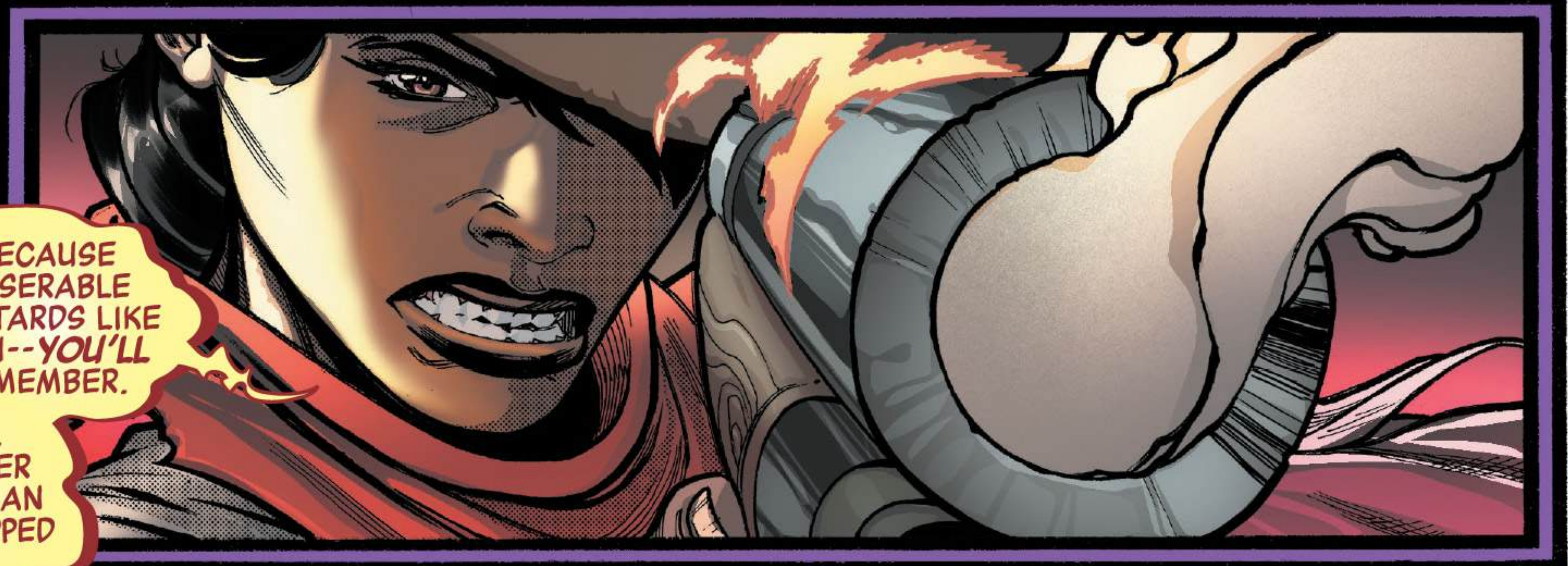
NO ONE WILL
REMEMBER THAT
YOU FOUGHT, THAT YOU
SUFFERED AND BLED,
THAT YOU EVER TOOK
A SINGLE BREATH.

SO TELL
ME, PHOENIX...
WHY EVEN
BOTHER?





GAAARRGH!



BECAUSE MISERABLE
BASTARDS LIKE
YOU-- YOU'LL
REMEMBER.

YOU'LL
REMEMBER
THE WOMAN
WHO STOPPED
YOU.



I'LL
REMEMBER
THAT YOU DIED
WITH MY GUN
IN YOUR
FACE!



SEPARATED
FROM YOUR
PARTNER, YOU
HAVE NO
CHANCE.

YOU'RE
TOO RAW, TOO
UNTAMED. LIKE A
WILDFIRE ALREADY
BURNING ITSELF
OUT.

GUUGH!



WITHOUT
THE STARBRAND,
YOU LOSE.



GOOD THING
THERE'S MORE
THAN ONE OF
US!



YOU! I KNOW
THAT TECH!
BECAUSE IT'S
MINE! WHERE DID
YOU GET IT? WHO
ARE YOU?!

I'M THE
DEVIL'S RIGHT-
HAND MAN.



HAIL
MEPHISTO.
HAIL
STARK.

WHAT?!?!

YOU?
HA, WHAT DO
YOU THINK
YOU'RE--?

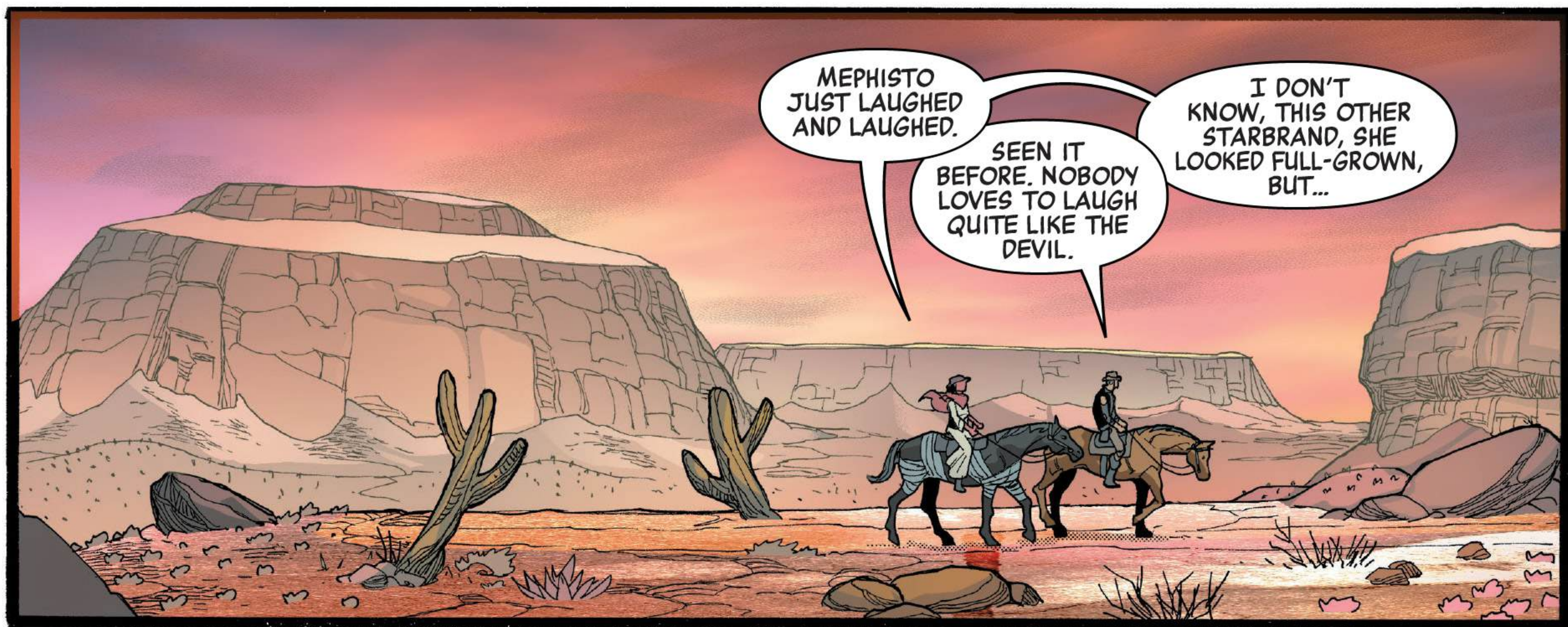


GUUGH!



"HE WAS
LAUGHING.

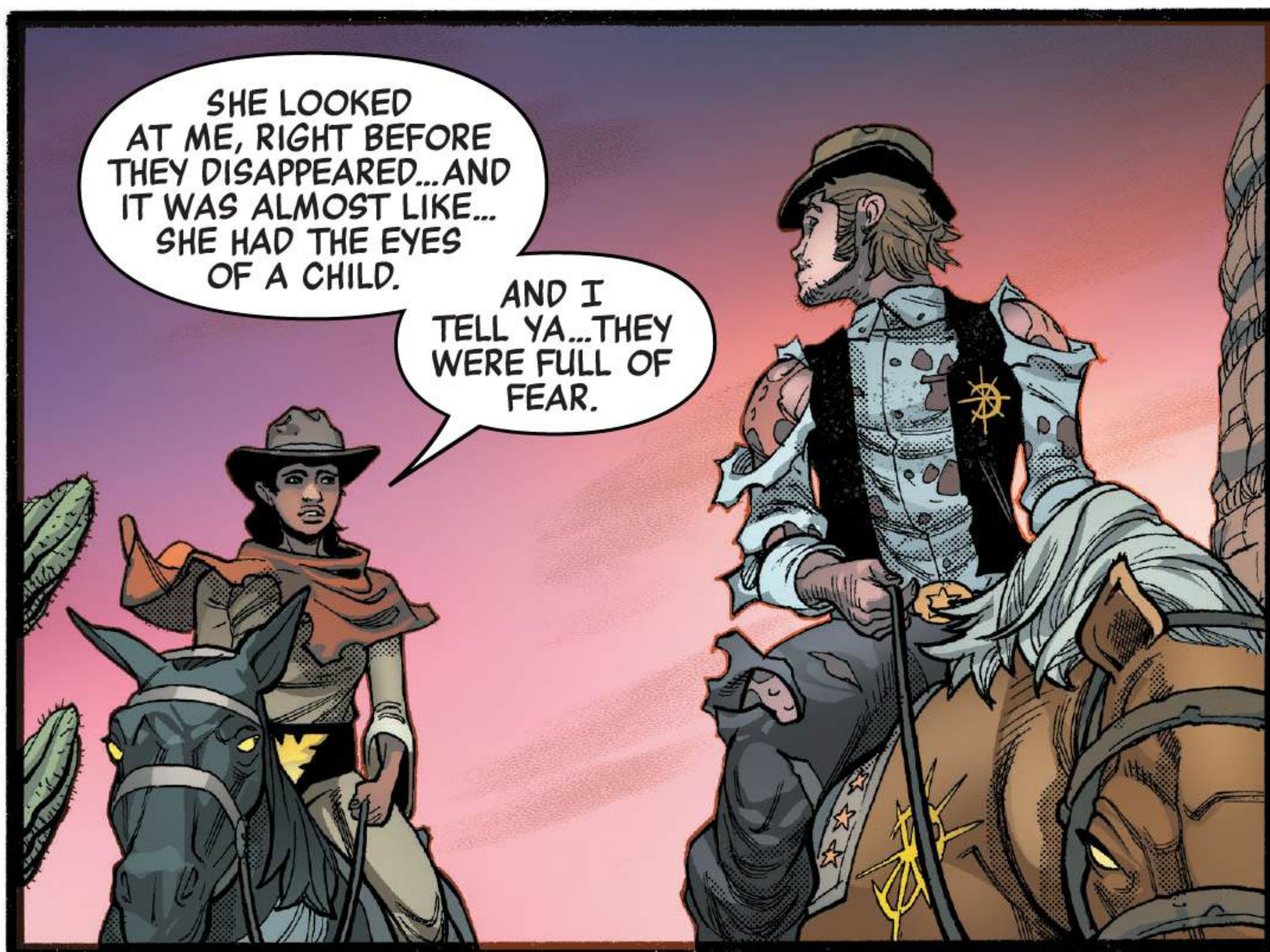
"AS THEY ALL FADED AWAY.
EVEN AS THE STARBRAND
WAS BEATING HIM."



MEPHISTO
JUST LAUGHED
AND LAUGHED.

SEEN IT
BEFORE. NOBODY
LOVES TO LAUGH
QUITE LIKE THE
DEVIL.

I DON'T
KNOW, THIS OTHER
STARBRAND, SHE
LOOKED FULL-GROWN,
BUT...



SHE LOOKED
AT ME, RIGHT BEFORE
THEY DISAPPEARED...AND
IT WAS ALMOST LIKE...
SHE HAD THE EYES
OF A CHILD.

AND I
TELL YA...THEY
WERE FULL OF
FEAR.



WHOEVER THEM
HEROES WAS, I
FEEL LIKE THEY
NEED OUR
HELP.

THEY'RE OFF CHASING
THEIR MEPHISTO
THROUGH TIME.



BUT WE GOT
OUR OWN DEVILS
TO DEAL WITH
RIGHT HERE.

DEAL? DID
SOMEBODY SAY
THEY'RE LOOKING
FOR A DEAL?



YEAH, ME
AND MY PARTNER
HERE ARE BOTH
LOOKING TO MAKE
A DEAL.

AND THE DEAL
IS...



...DRAW!



DRUIG, LEADER OF THE ETERNALS, TARGETED ALL MUTANTS FOR EXTERMINATION, LAUNCHING AN ATTACK ON THEIR ISLAND-NATION OF KRAKOA. THE AVENGERS ALLIED WITH A GROUP OF ETERNALS OPPOSED TO DRUIG'S PLAN, AND TOGETHER, THEY USED AVENGERS MOUNTAIN, THE HUSK OF A DEAD CELESTIAL, TO CREATE A NEW GOD: THE PROGENITOR. BUT ONCE AWAKENED, THE PROGENITOR MADE A PROCLAMATION TO EVERYONE ON EARTH: THEY HAVE A MERE 24 HOURS TO PROVE THEIR WORTH--AND IF THEY ARE FOUND LACKING, ALL WILL DIE!

NEW YORK CITY.

THE RANGE OF PROBLEMS THAT CAN BE SOLVED WITH A BOW AND ARROW IS RELATIVELY NARROW.

HEY!
DON'T WORRY,
BUDDY!

IT'S
NOT **HUMAN**
BLOOD.



BUT WHEN YOU
FIND ONE--

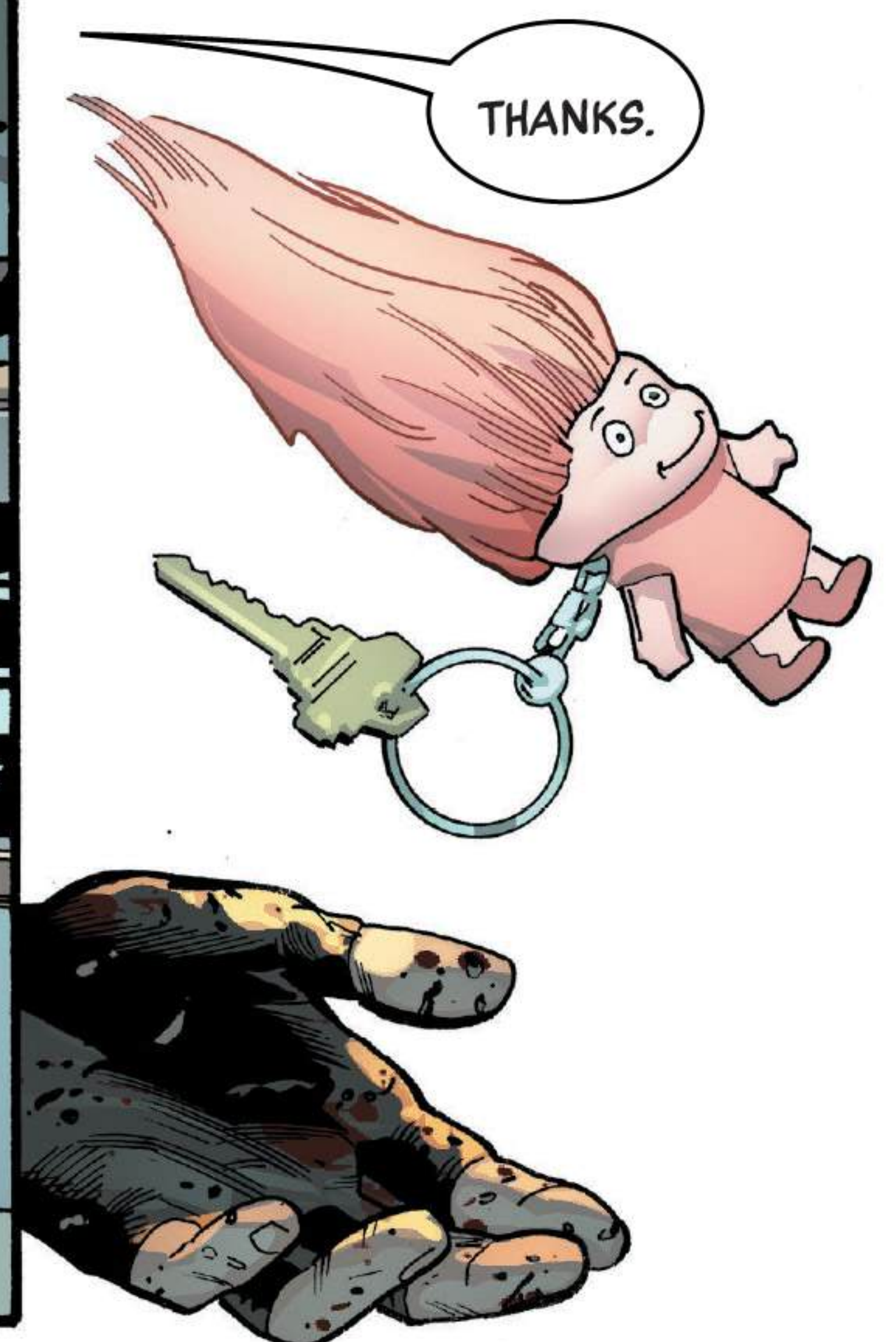
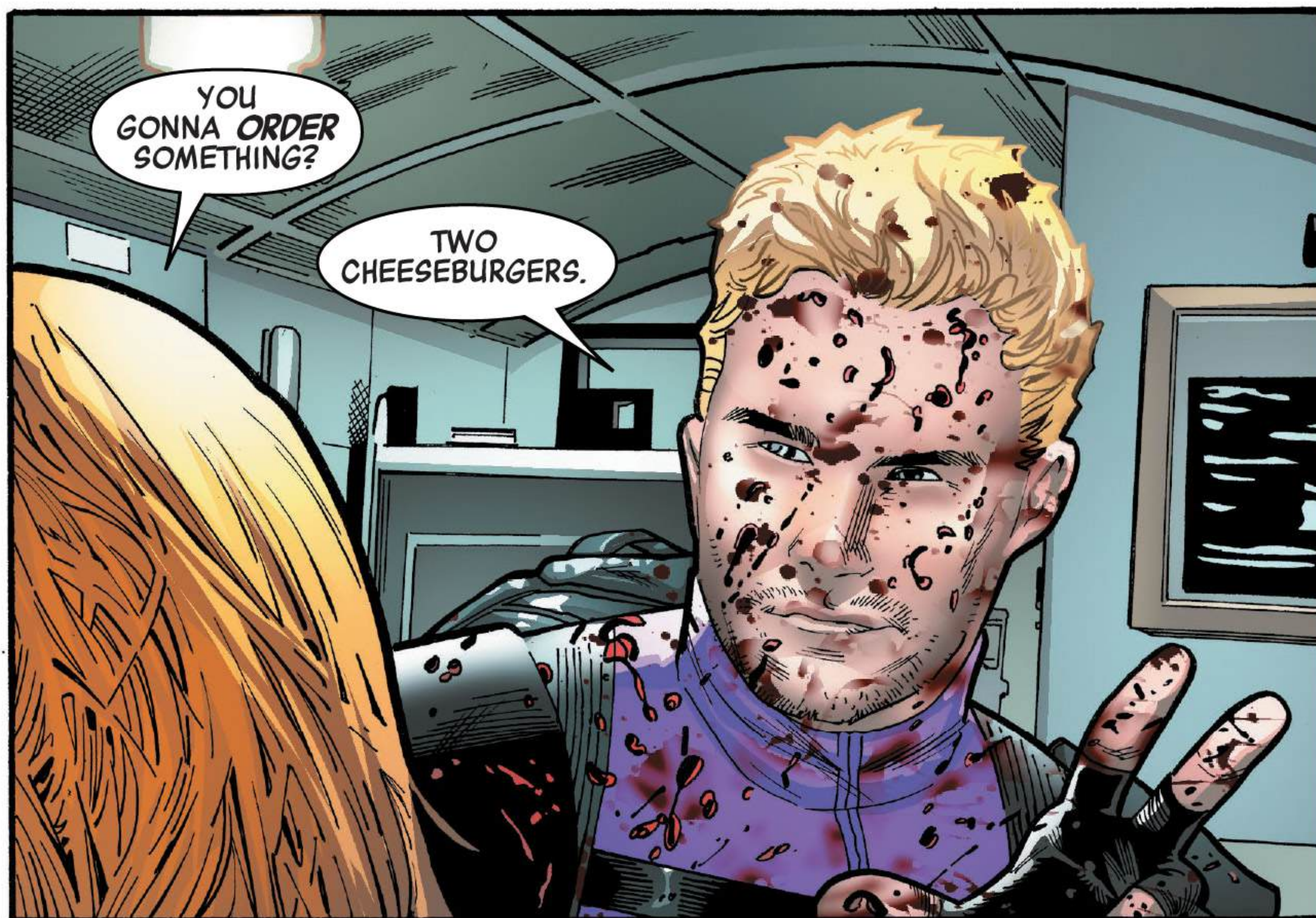
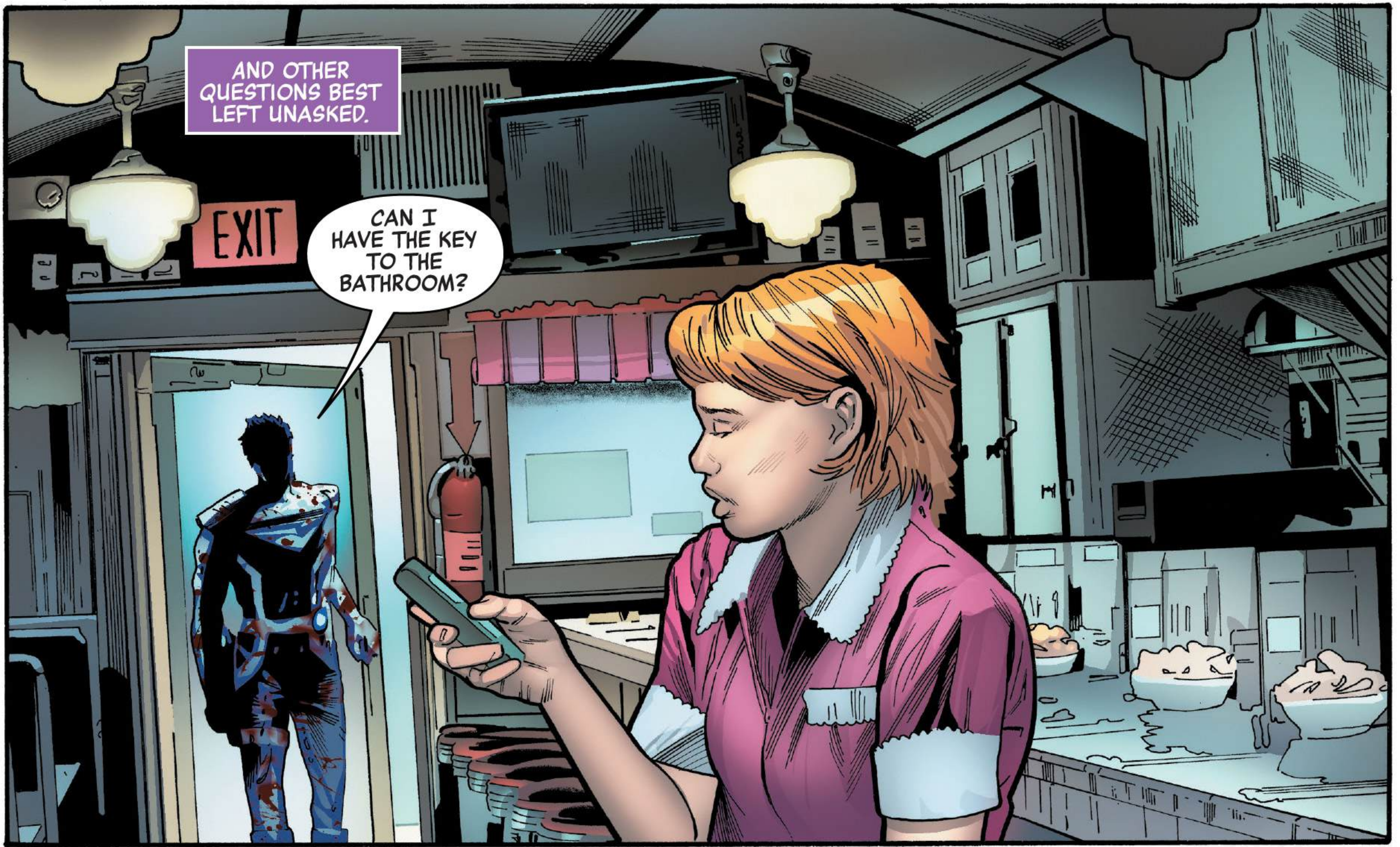


--ALL THE YEARS
OF DEVOTING
YOURSELF TO A
WEAPON THAT
PRE-DATES PANTS--

--SORTA
MAKE
SENSE.

IT'S THE *REST OF THE
TIME* THAT YOU ASK
YOURSELF JUST WHAT
THE HELL YOU'VE DONE
WITH YOUR LIFE.







IF YOU REALIZE HOW GOOD IT FEELS TO NOT BE COVERED IN BLOOD, THEN YOU'VE PROBABLY MADE SOME POOR DECISIONS IN LIFE.

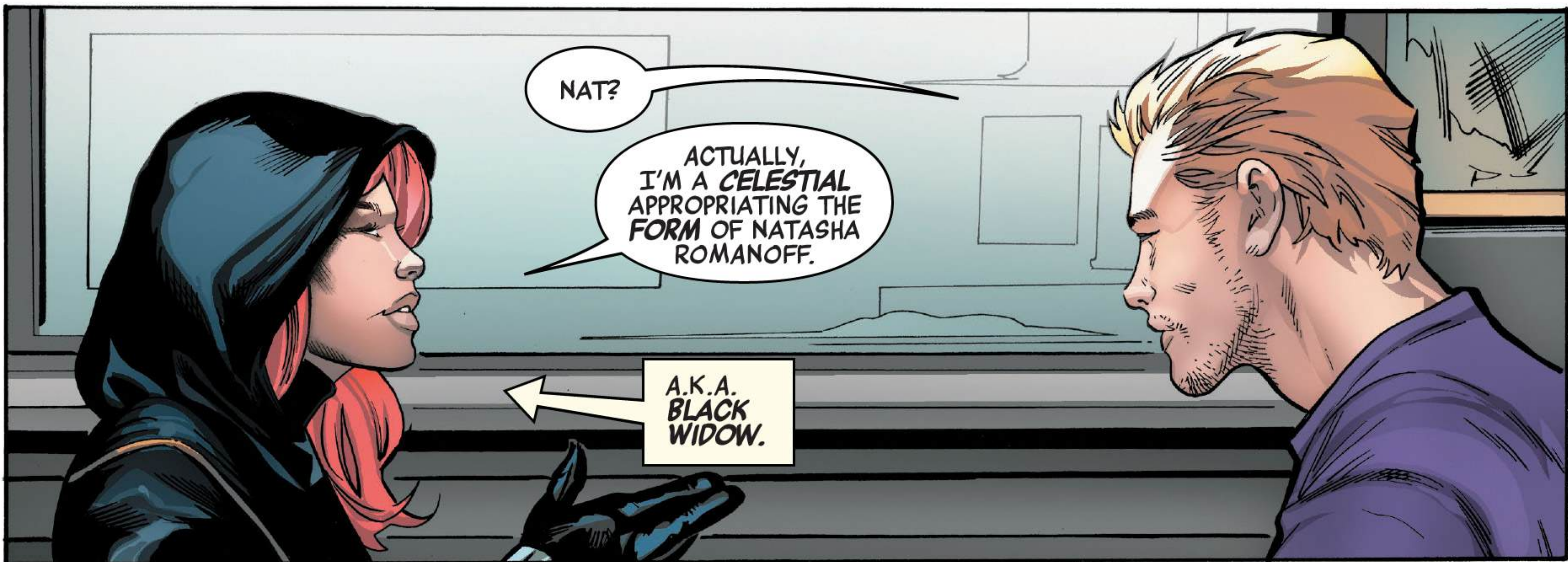
BUT AT A CERTAIN AGE, YOU WAKE UP AND SUDDENLY REALIZE THAT ALL THE REAL CHOICES YOU HAD IN LIFE--

--YOU'VE ALREADY MADE.



AND NOW YOU'RE JUST SOME GUY DOING WHATEVER SOME YOUNGER VERSION OF HIMSELF CHOSE FOR HIM.

HI, CLINT.



NAT?

ACTUALLY, I'M A *CELESTIAL* APPROPRIATING THE FORM OF NATASHA ROMANOFF.

A.K.A. *BLACK WIDOW*.

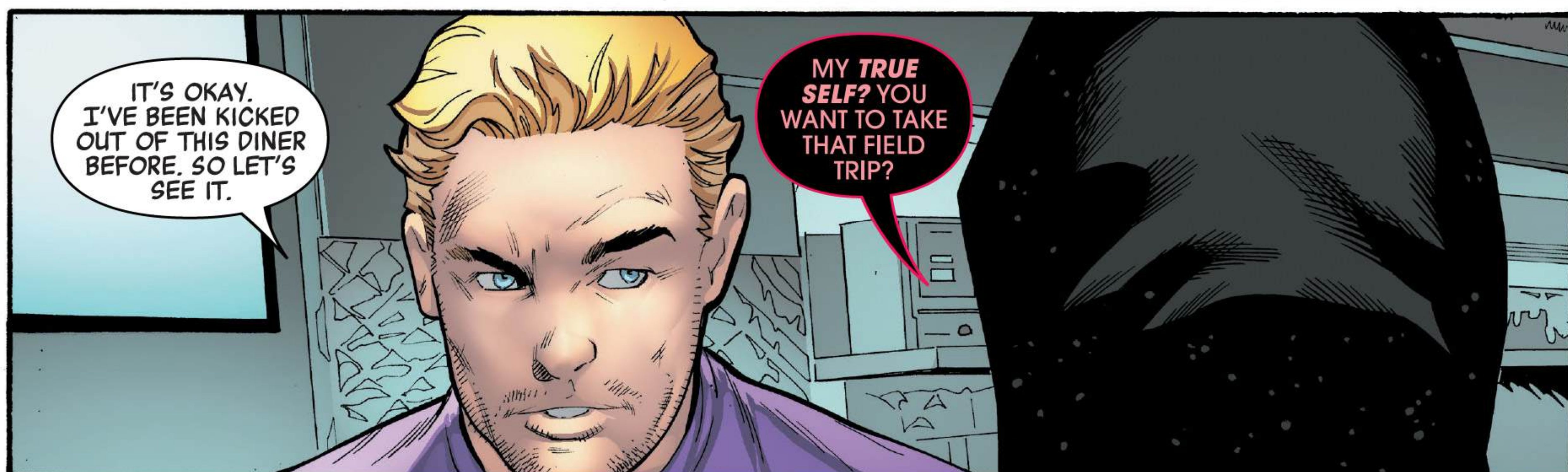
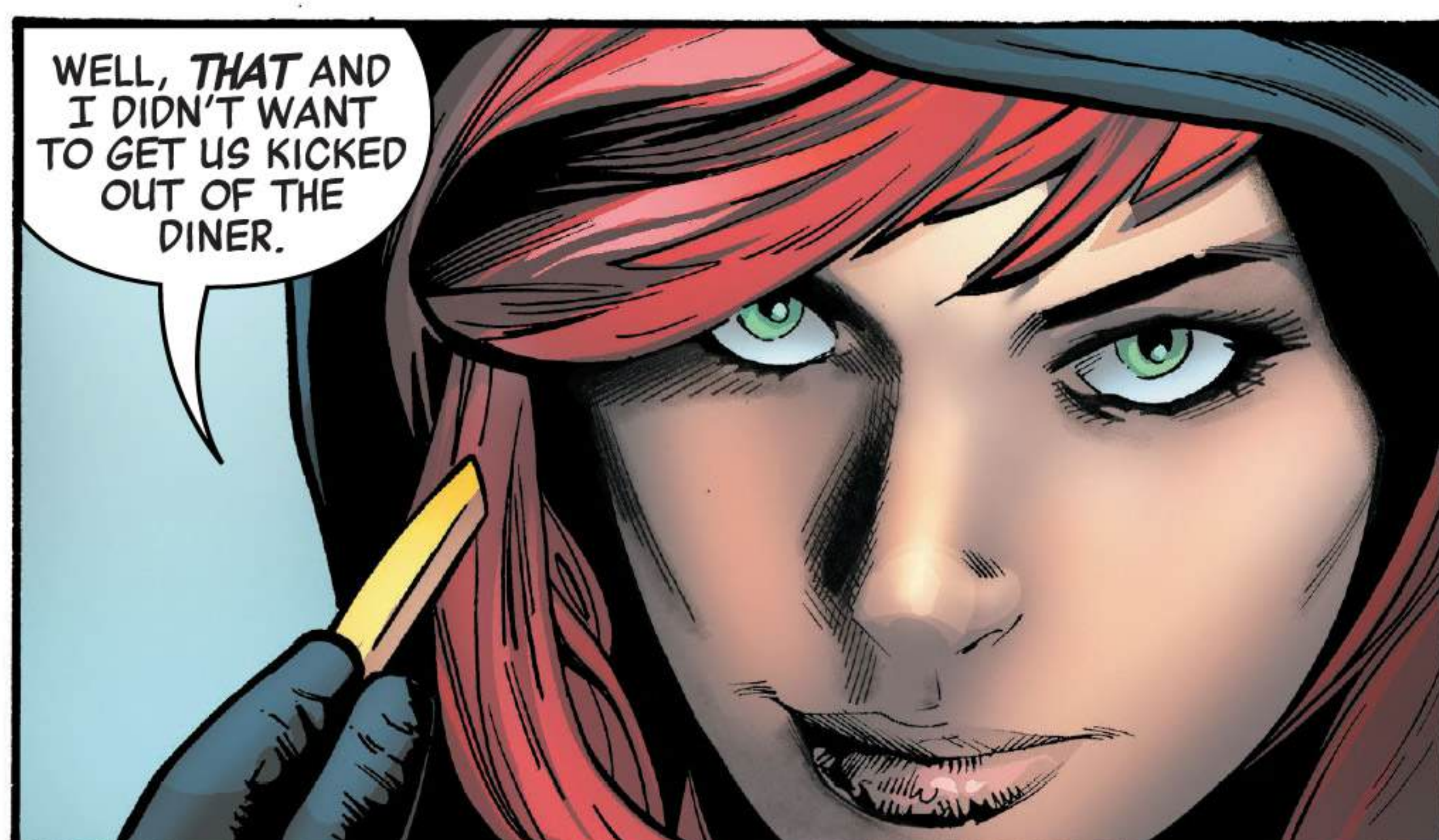


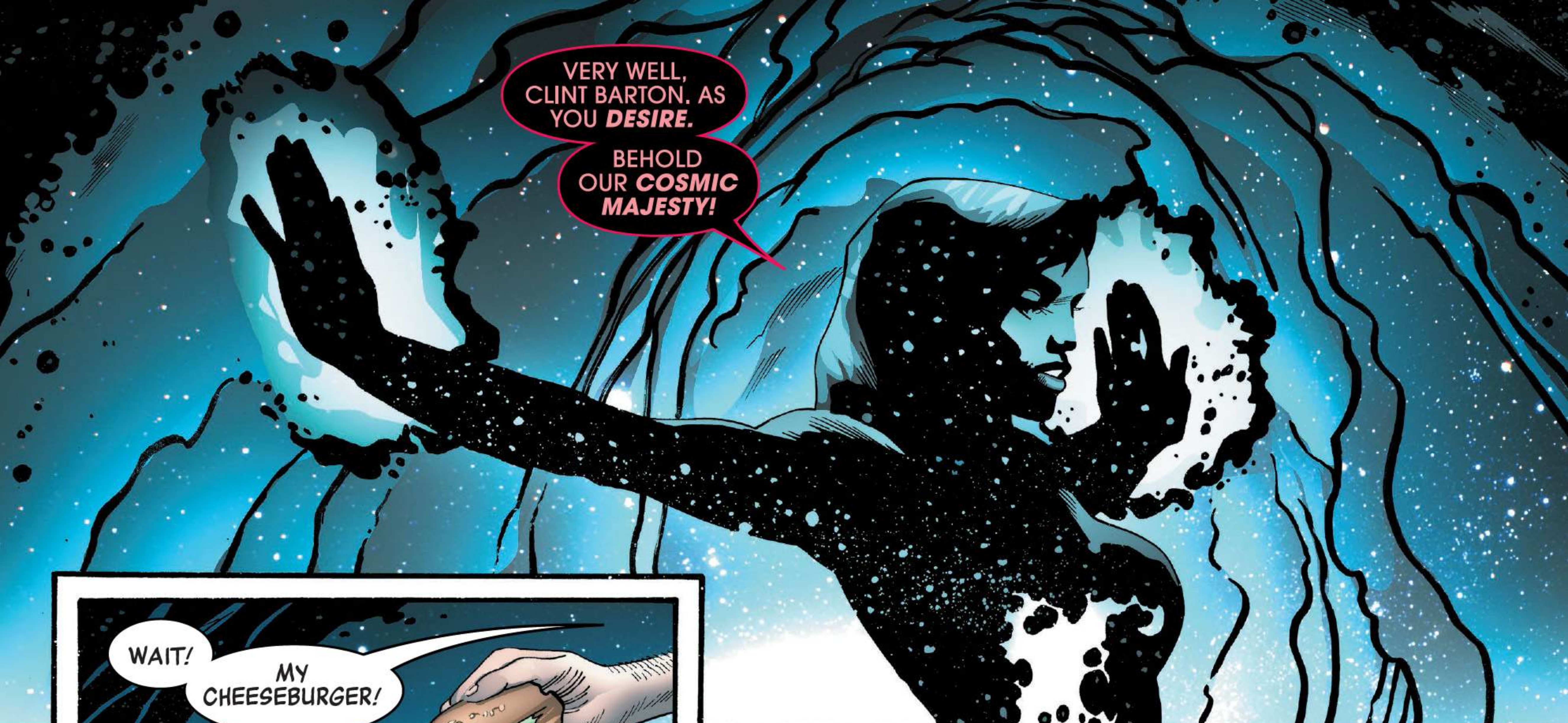
SARCASM IS THE LOWEST FORM OF WIT, NAT.

REALLY? ACCORDING TO WHO?

I DON'T KNOW. I READ IT IN A BOX OF CRACKER JACKS.

IT CAME WITH A TEMPORARY TATTOO.





VERY WELL, CLINT BARTON. AS YOU **DESIRE**.

BEHOLD OUR **COSMIC MAJESTY!**



WAIT!

MY
CHEESEBURGER!



THE CELESTIAL CONTINUUM HAS CATEGORIZED THE HUMAN SPECIES AS A **TILF**.

TERRESTRIAL
I'D LIKE TO--?

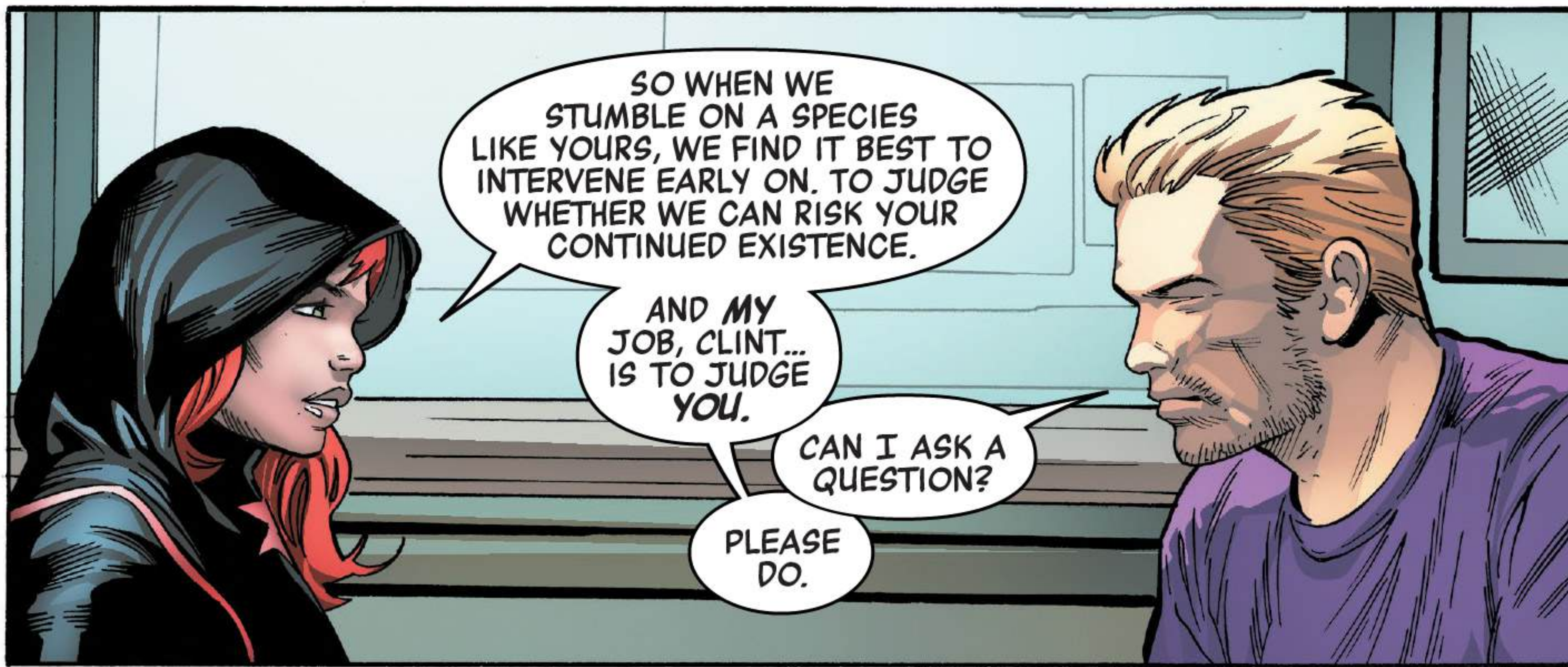
**TECHNO-
LOGICALLY
INCLINED LIFE
FORAGERS.**

IT MEANS
YOU'RE
SELF-DESTRUCTIVE...
BUT YOU LIKE AN
AUDIENCE.

YOU'RE
CURIOUS...SO YOU
SPREAD YOURSELVES OUT
EVERYWHERE. GET INTO
EVERYTHING.

SURROUNDING
YOURSELVES WITH
INNOCENT BYSTANDERS...
AND THEN YOU JUST SORT
OF **IMplode.**

TILFs ARE,
LIKE...A **HUGE
RED FLAG**
FOR US.



SO WHEN WE STUMBLE ON A SPECIES LIKE YOURS, WE FIND IT BEST TO INTERVENE EARLY ON. TO JUDGE WHETHER WE CAN RISK YOUR CONTINUED EXISTENCE.

AND MY JOB, CLINT... IS TO JUDGE YOU.

CAN I ASK A QUESTION?

PLEASE DO.



SAY...
HYPOTHETICALLY...



...THAT I TOOK MY LITTLE BOW AND ARROW, STOOD ON A ROOFTOP, LOOKED DOWN ON THE PEOPLE WALKING BY BELOW AND SAID TO MYSELF... "THAT GUY'S BEEN IN JAIL. THAT KID PLAYS BEJEWELED ALL DAY AT SCHOOL. THAT WOMAN HAS TERRIBLE TASTE IN COATS."

AND THEN, HYPOTHETICALLY, SAY I JUST STARTED KILLING EVERYONE WHO DIDN'T MEASURE UP TO MY WHOLLY ARBITRARY STANDARDS...

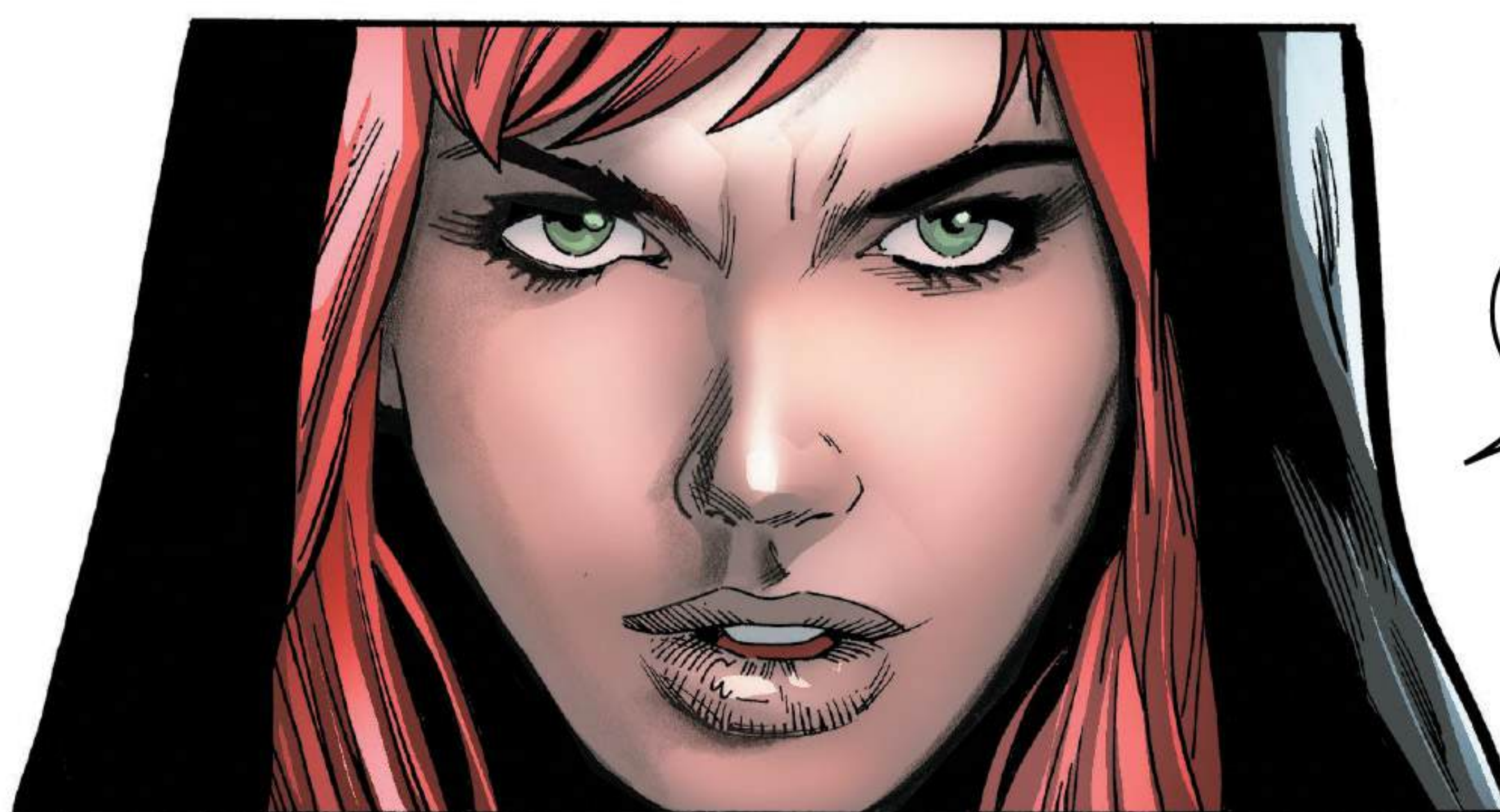


...WOULD I PASS YOUR TEST?



OUR STANDARDS ARE **NOT** ARBITRARY.

OH? THEN WHAT ARE THEY BASED ON?



THEY'RE **COMPLICATED**. AND, FRANKLY, NOT UP TO YOU.



NO, IT'S **YOUR** SWIMMING POOL SO IT'S **YOUR** RULES. I GET IT.

BUT LET'S **UNDERSTAND** SOMETHING. THE **ONLY REASON** YOU'RE THE ONE JUDGING US IS BECAUSE YOU'RE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO FORCE YOUR JUDGMENT ON US.

DON'T FOOL YOURSELF INTO THINKING **YOU'RE** ANY BETTER.



I MEAN, YOU HAVEN'T EVEN THOUGHT THIS THROUGH ENOUGH TO COME UP WITH A **BASELINE**.

LIKE, YOU'RE JUDGING THE WORTH OF MY EXISTENCE... COMPARED TO WHAT?



OKAY! YOU WANT A **BASELINE**? YOU WANT A **STANDARD** TO BE JUDGED BY? HOW ABOUT **THIS--**

--WHETHER YOUR LIFE BRINGS AS MUCH JOY AND MEANING TO THE UNIVERSE AS THAT **BLUE METAL BOX**.

INTERESTING.

STILL NOT PLAYING YOUR GAME THOUGH.

IN CASE I HAVEN'T BEEN CLEAR, YOU DON'T HAVE A **CHOICE**, CLINT.

SO NOTED.

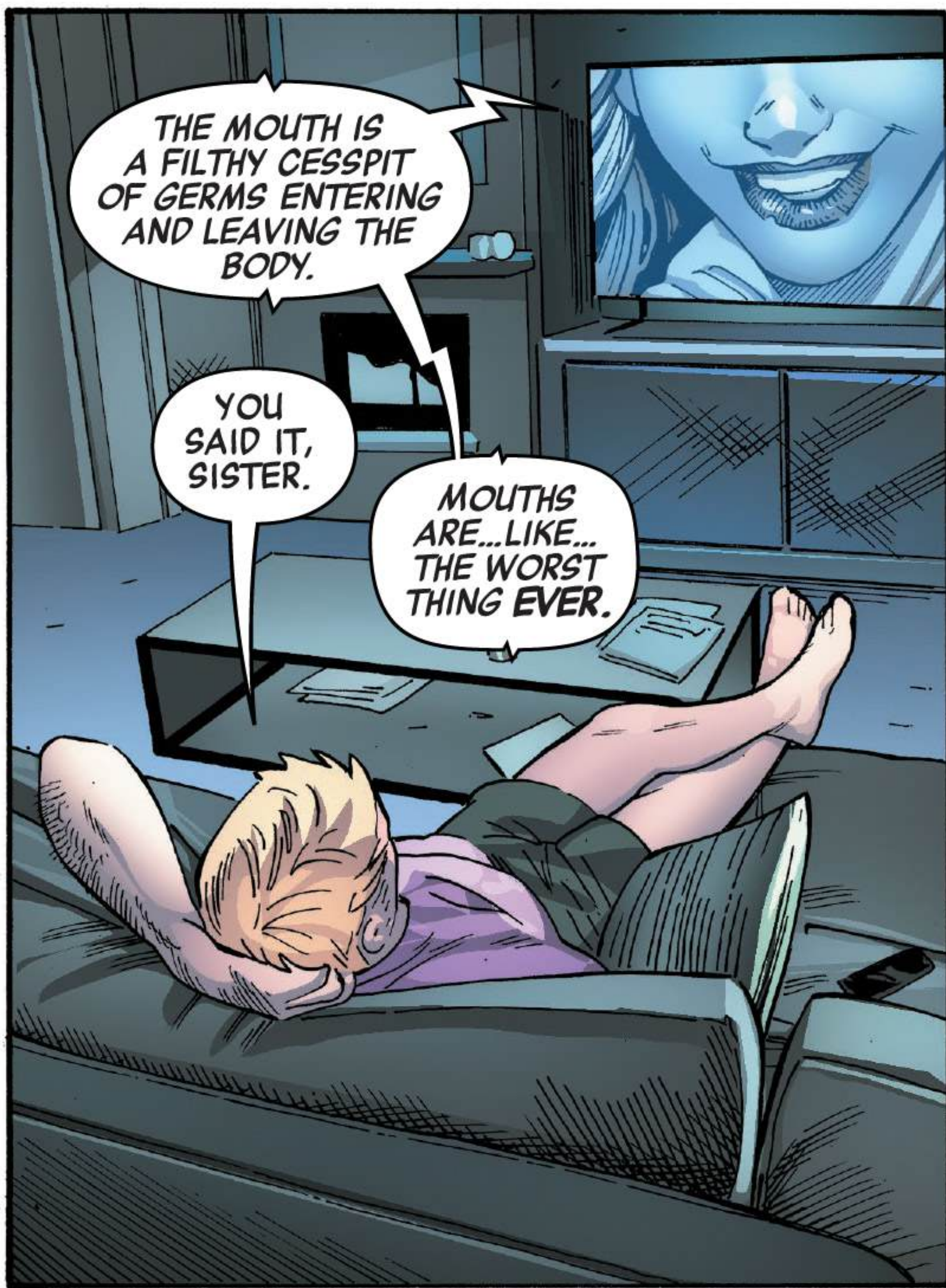


WHETHER YOU CARE TO ACT LIKE IT OR NOT, YOU **WILL** BE JUDGED. YOU HAVE **24 HOURS**.

SO I SUGGEST YOU **PAD YOUR STATS** A LITTLE. I SUGGEST YOU TAKE THIS **SERIOUSLY!**



OH, DON'T WORRY. I **WILL!**



THE MOUTH IS A FILTHY CESSPIT OF GERMS ENTERING AND LEAVING THE BODY.

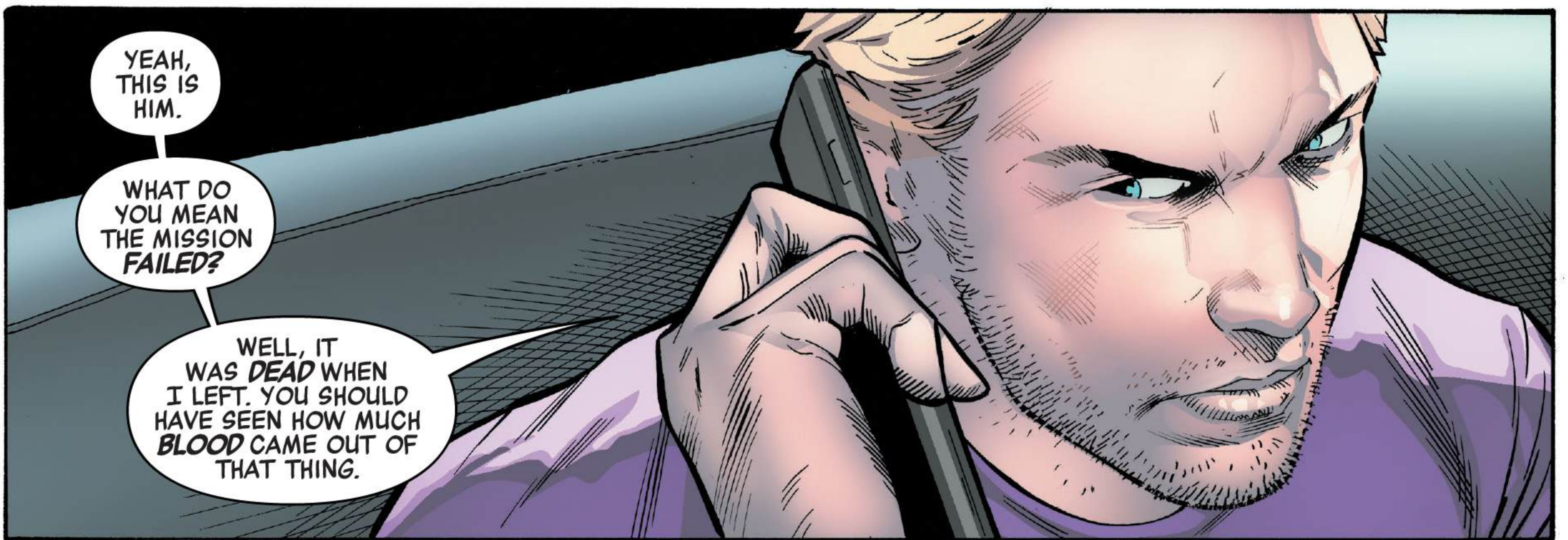
YOU SAID IT, SISTER.

MOUTHS ARE...LIKE...THE WORST THING EVER.



WHICH IS WHY YOU NEED STARK TOOTHPASTE. NOW WITH NANO-CRYSTALS!

OH, WHAT NOW?



YEAH, THIS IS HIM.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN THE MISSION FAILED?

WELL, IT WAS DEAD WHEN I LEFT. YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN HOW MUCH BLOOD CAME OUT OF THAT THING.



NO. I'M NOT THE EXPERT ON ALIEN PHYSIOLOGY.

=SIGH= YOU'RE THE EXPERT ON ALIEN PHYSIOLOGY.



SO THERE'S A PISSED-OFF ALIEN RUNNING AROUND THE SEWERS OF NEW YORK. GOT IT.

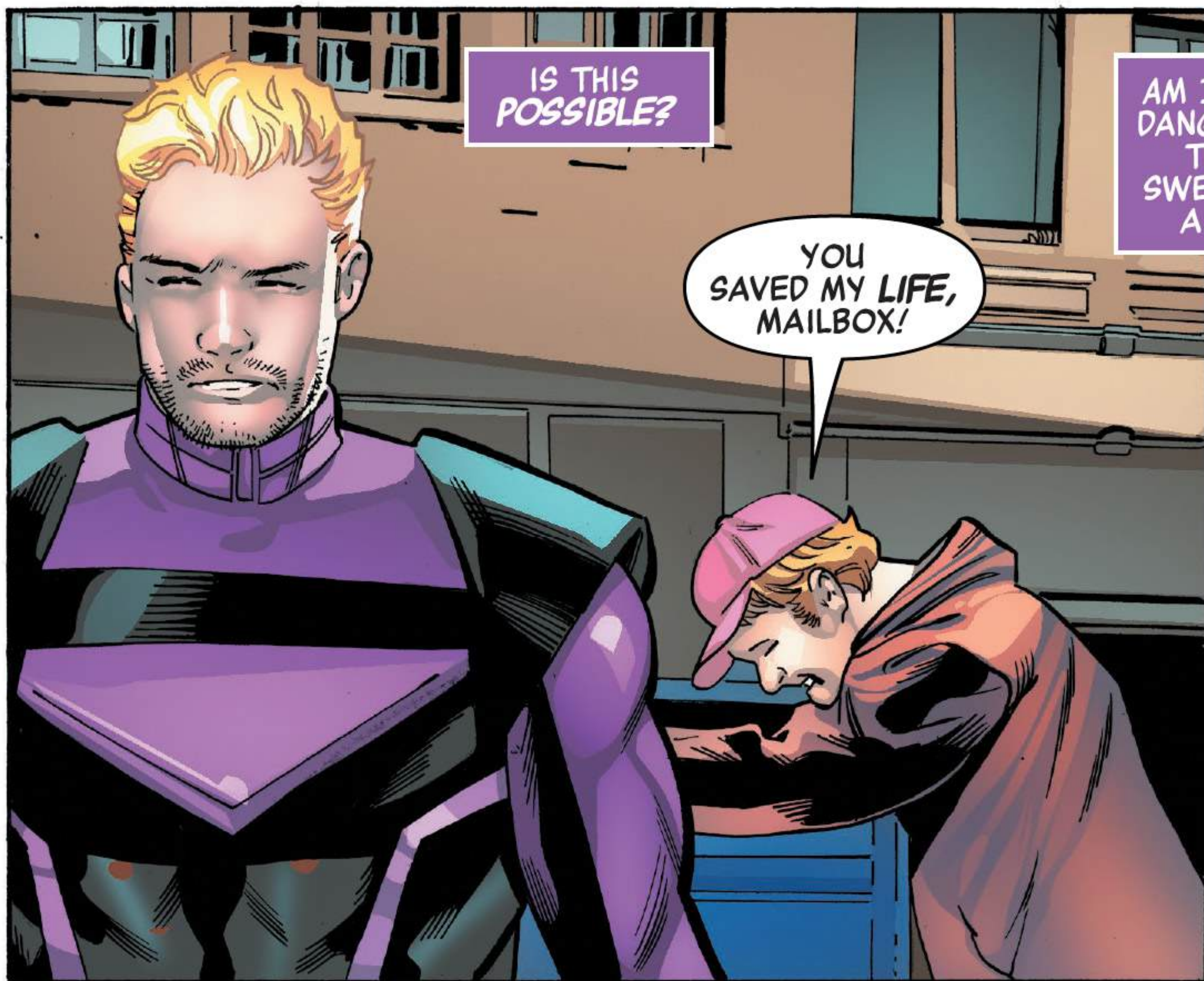
AND IT'S MY FAULT. YES, I GOT THAT TOO.

I SHOULD PROBABLY TELL THE MAYOR.



I MEAN, YEAH, *OKAY*, I SCREWED UP. BUT STILL... COMPARED TO THE *MAIL SERVICE*--

THANK GOD! A *MAILBOX*! THE MONEY SHOULD GET TO HER JUST IN TIME.



IS THIS *POSSIBLE*?

YOU SAVED MY LIFE, *MAILBOX*!

AM I ACTUALLY IN DANGER OF LOSING THE COSMIC SWEEPSTAKES TO A *MAILBOX*?



I'M A BIG GIRL!

ALL SIGNS POINT TO *MAYBE*.



I MEAN, TO BE FAIR, I HAVE HELPED *SAVE THE WORLD* A BUNCH OF TIMES. BUT IS THAT THE WAY IT WORKS?

I REALLY HOPE BILLY LIKES THESE COOKIES.

YOU DO SOMETHING *REALLY GOOD* ONCE IN A WHILE AND THEN YOU CAN TAKE THE REST OF YOUR LIFE *OFF*?

OR ARE YOU WHO YOU ARE *EVERY DAY*?



AND THAT HE KNOWS I'M SORRY.

CITY HALL.

WHATEVER THE OUTCOME OF THIS EXISTENTIAL BAKE-OFF... I NEEDED TO *KNOW*.

WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, CLINT?

I'VE BEEN DOING SOME THINKING LATELY.

LUKE CAGE

DO WE ACTUALLY DO ANY *GOOD* HERE?

OR DO WE JUST CALL IT GOOD BECAUSE WE'RE GOOD AT DOING IT?

I GUESS WHAT I'M ASKING IS...

...IS THERE ANY STANDARD BY WHICH WE CAN JUDGE *OURSELVES* THAT ISN'T COMPLETELY ARBITRARY OR *SELF-DEALING*?

CLINT...

...I'M THE *MAYOR*.

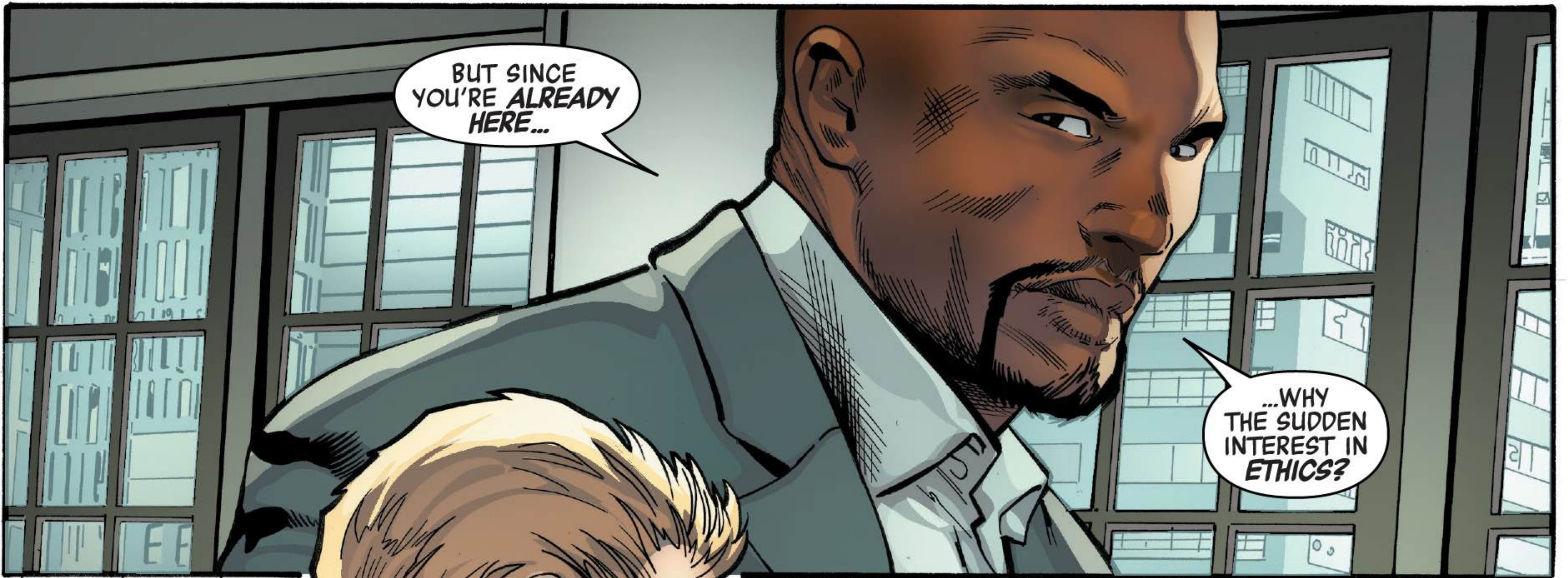
I KNOW. I JUST NEEDED TO TALK TO SOMEONE SMART.

I HEAR *TONY STARK* IS AVAILABLE.

NOT *THAT* SMART. YOU'LL DO.

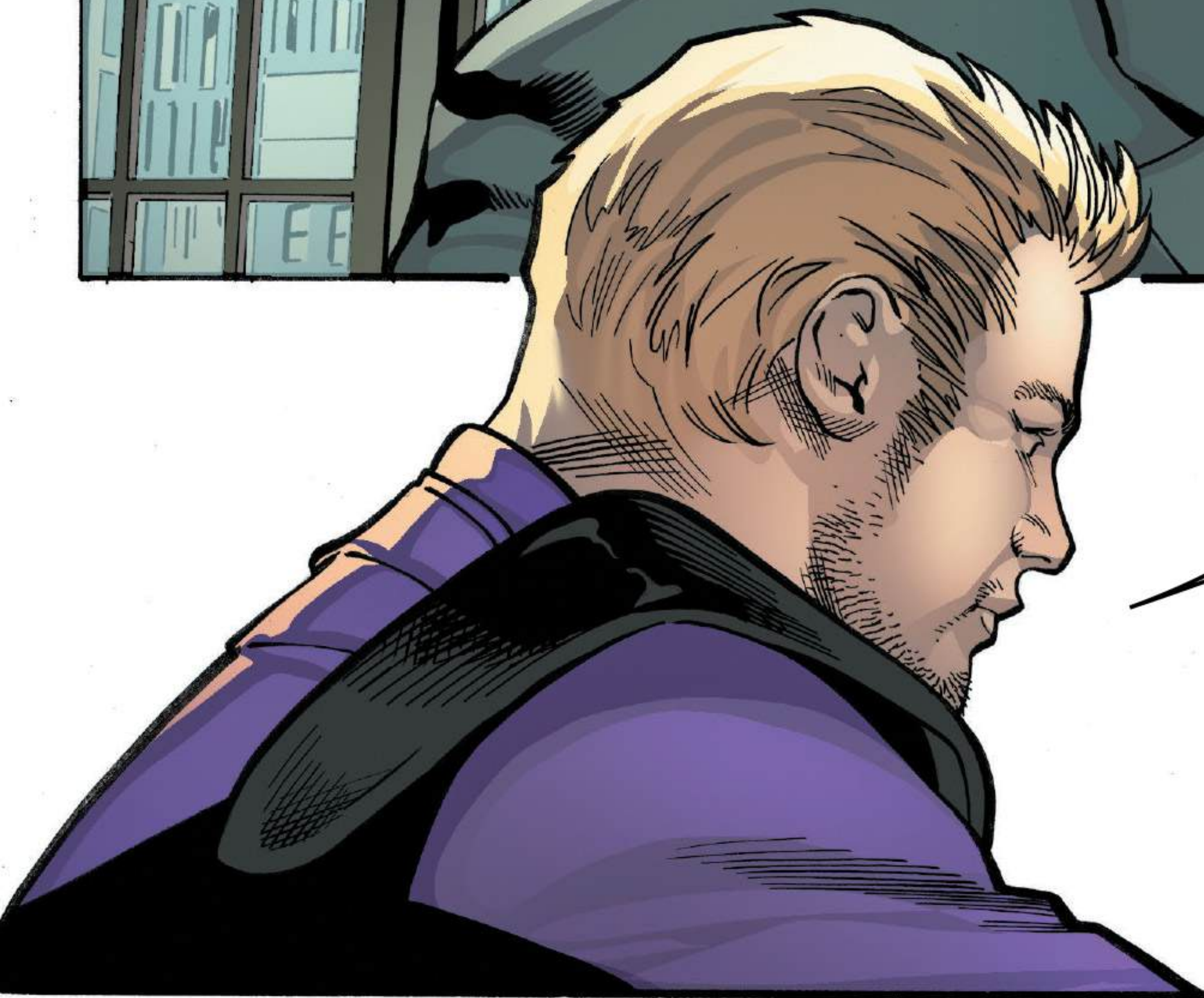


MY APPARENTLY TOO-SUBTLE POINT IS THAT I HAVE A CITY TO RUN.



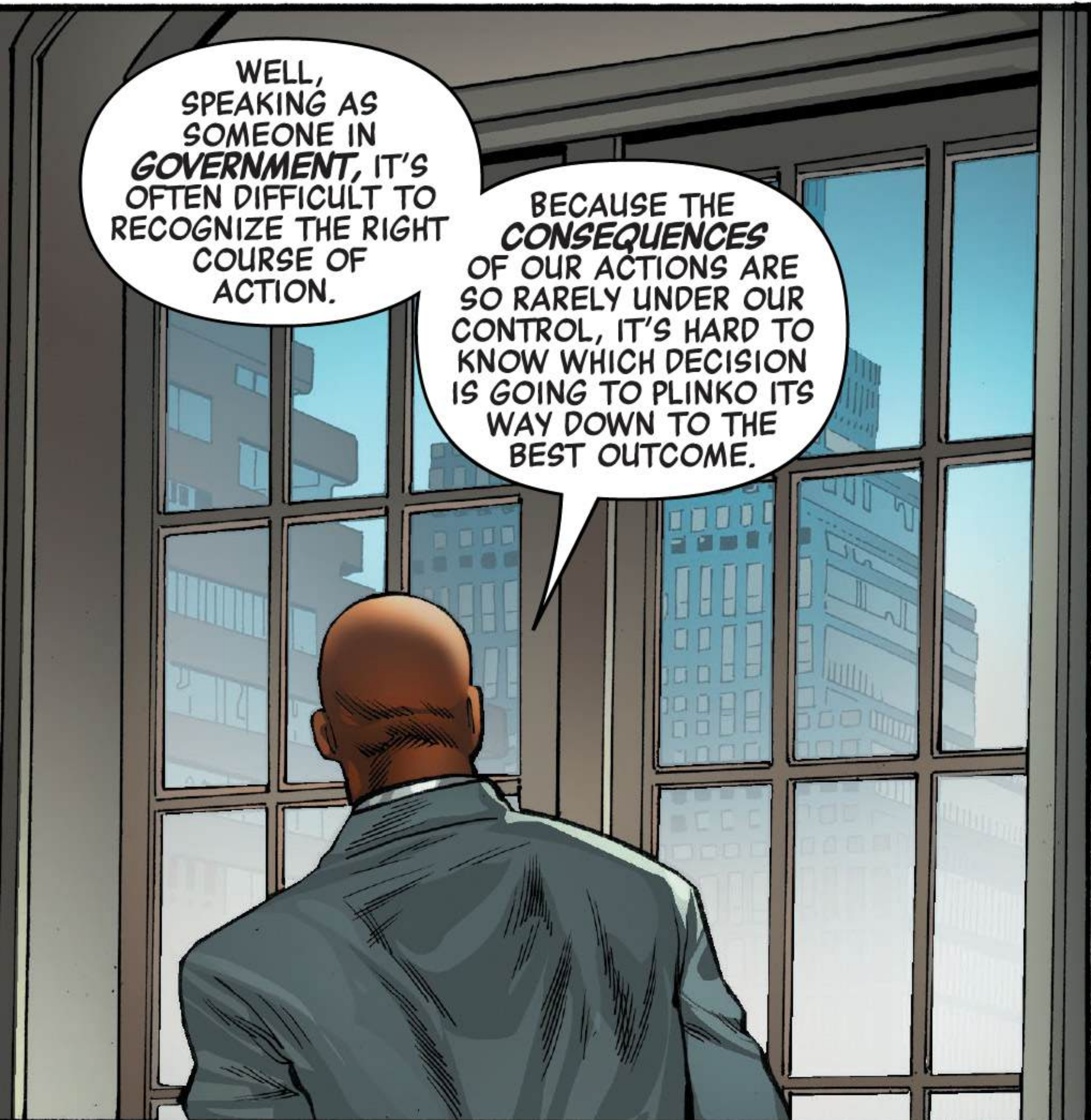
BUT SINCE YOU'RE ALREADY HERE...

...WHY THE SUDDEN INTEREST IN ETHICS?



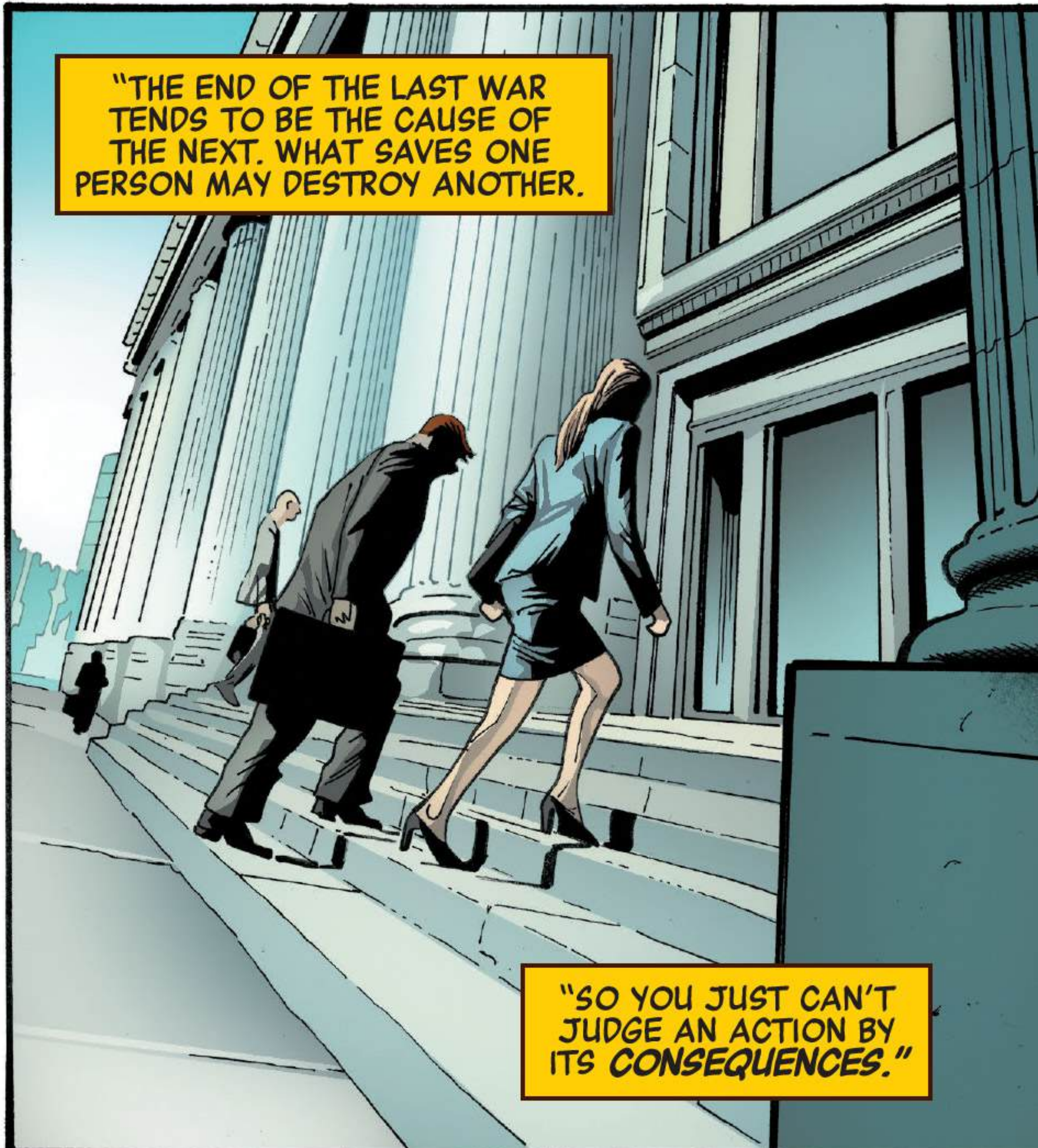
NO REASON.

JUST THINKING ABOUT GETTING AN IPHONE IS ALL.



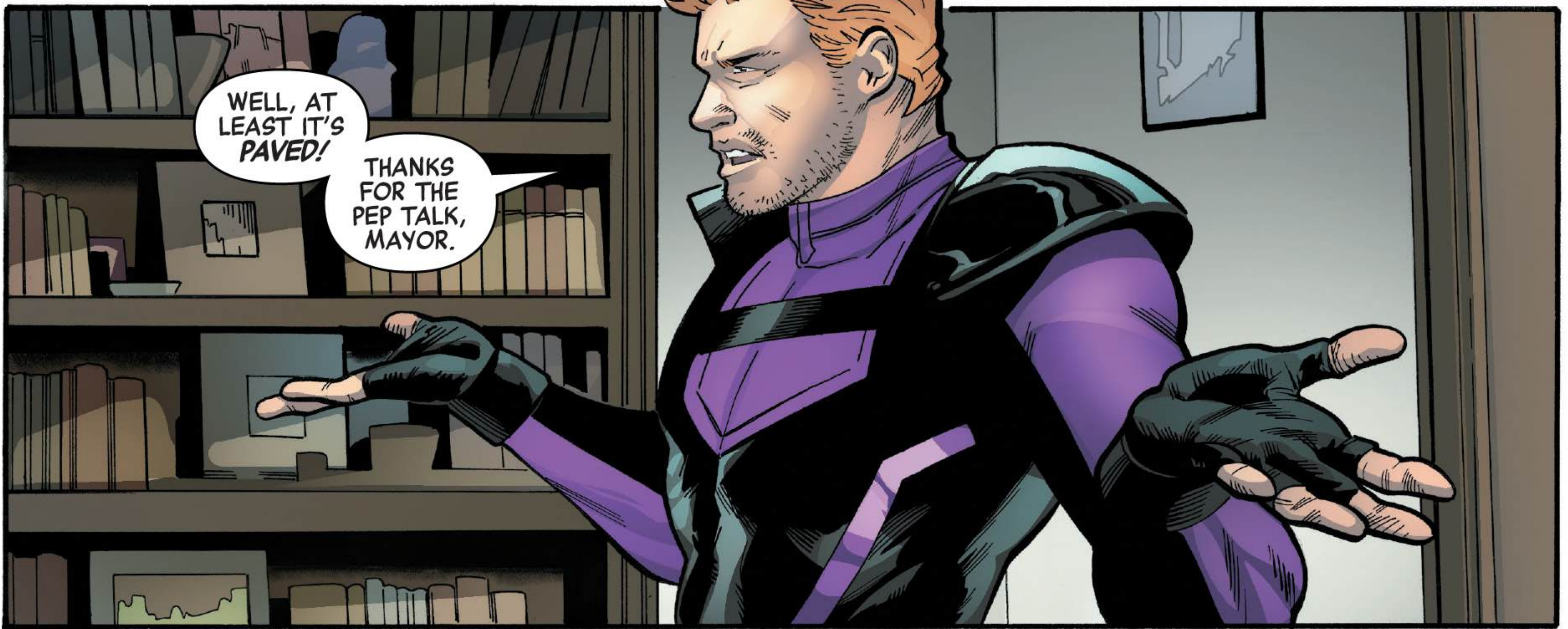
WELL, SPEAKING AS SOMEONE IN **GOVERNMENT**, IT'S OFTEN DIFFICULT TO RECOGNIZE THE RIGHT COURSE OF ACTION.

BECAUSE THE **CONSEQUENCES** OF OUR ACTIONS ARE SO RARELY UNDER OUR CONTROL, IT'S HARD TO KNOW WHICH DECISION IS GOING TO PLINKO ITS WAY DOWN TO THE BEST OUTCOME.



"THE END OF THE LAST WAR TENDS TO BE THE CAUSE OF THE NEXT. WHAT SAVES ONE PERSON MAY DESTROY ANOTHER.

"SO YOU JUST CAN'T JUDGE AN ACTION BY ITS **CONSEQUENCES**."





WELL, HE WASN'T MUCH HELP.

BUT THEN, WHAT DOES IT EVEN MEAN TO JUDGE THE HUMAN RACE, ANYWAY?

FRANKENSTEIN HAD PRETTY NICE TEETH FOR A DEAD GUY.



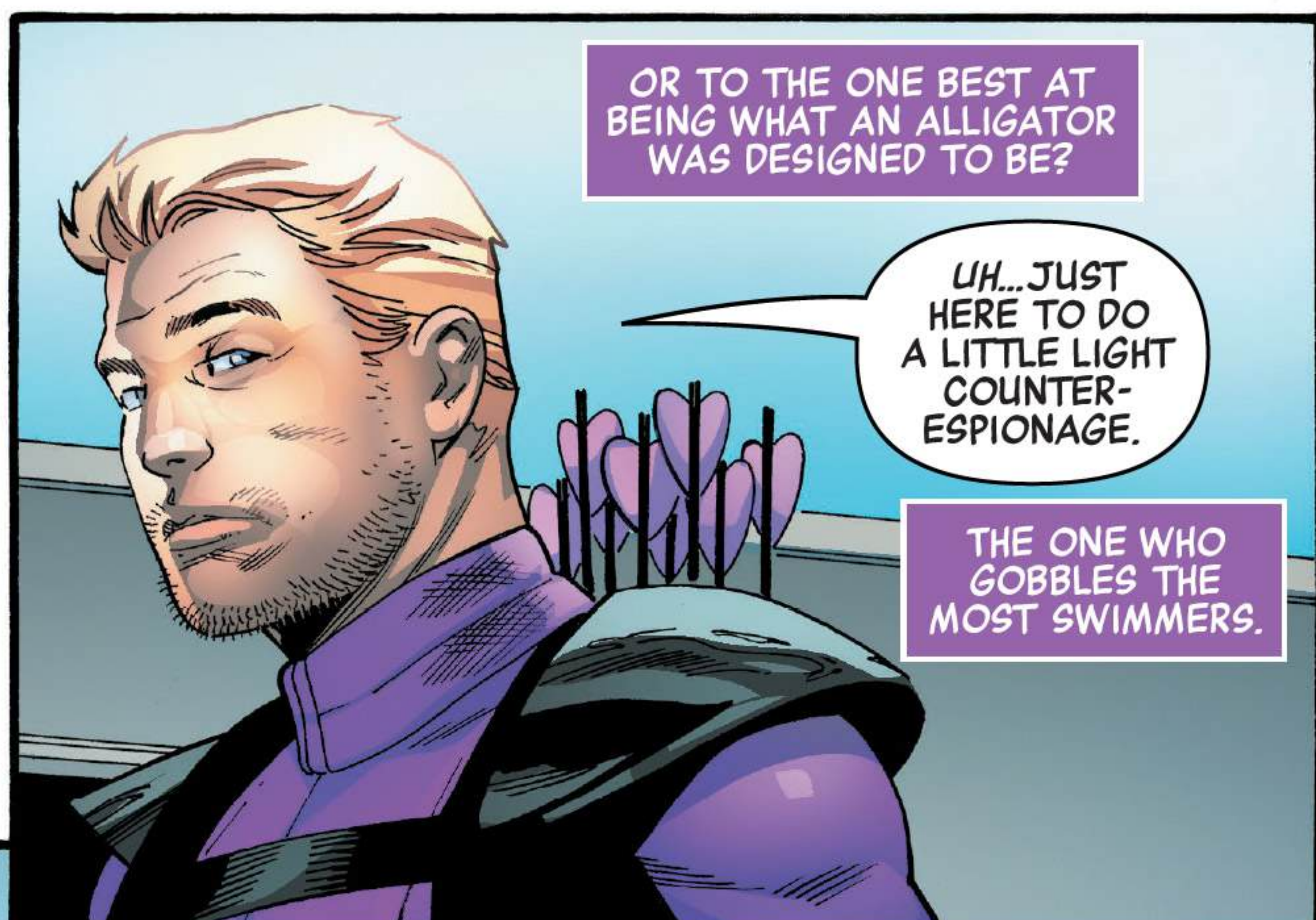
LIKE, SAY YOU'RE GIVING A PRIZE FOR "BEST ALLIGATOR." WHO DO YOU GIVE IT TO?

ONE THAT COMPLETELY IGNORES THE FACT THAT IT'S AN ALLIGATOR?



CAN WE HELP YOU?

AN ALLIGATOR SAINT?



OR TO THE ONE BEST AT BEING WHAT AN ALLIGATOR WAS DESIGNED TO BE?

UH...JUST HERE TO DO A LITTLE LIGHT COUNTER-ESPIONAGE.

THE ONE WHO GOBBLES THE MOST SWIMMERS.



DAMN NEW YORK CITY ROOFTOPS. WHEN DID THEY ALL GET CONVERTED INTO TERRACES?

PLEASE. GO ABOUT YOUR DAY AS IF I'M NOT EVEN HERE.

I'LL JUST BE WORKING DISCREETLY BEHIND THE HYDRANGEAS.

I WONDER IF CROSSFIRE EVER HAS THIS PROBLEM?

APPARENTLY
NOT. LUCKY
DUCK.

LOOKS LIKE I'M JUST IN TIME
TO STOP AN ASSASSINATION.
SEE? THIS IS *IMPORTANT*
WORK. RIGHT? THE FATE OF
NATIONS HANGS IN THE BALANCE.

THOUGH IT'S WEIRD HOW MUCH
OF THE ASSASSINATION GAME
COMES DOWN TO WHO CAN
FIND THE *HIGHER ROOFTOP*.

CHOBHAM-LINED, SHOCK-
ABSORBENT ARMOR. EVEN
IF I HIT HIM, IT MIGHT
NOT BE ENOUGH TO
KNOCK HIM OFF HIS SHOT.

BETTER MOVE
TO *PLAN B*.

FWHITTTT

CH-THUNK

GOOOSH

IS *THAT* WHY I DO THIS? BECAUSE THE PROBLEMS YOU CAN SOLVE WITH A BOW AND ARROW JUST TEND TO BE *SIMPLER*?

HUH?

OH.

CRAP IN A HAT.

RAV
EN
CE

LIFE WOULD BE SO MUCH EASIER IF I WAS A MAILBOX. MAYBE THE CELESTIAL WAS *RIGHT*. MAYBE I AM HOPELESSLY OUTCLASSED IN THIS COMPETITION.

LOOKS LIKE THE *ADULT SWIM* IS UNDERWAY.

UHHNNFF!

BETTER PUT
A PIN IN THE
INTERNAL
MONOLOGUE.



DAMN IT,
HAWKEYE!

LET'S SEE
A MAILBOX
DO THAT!

WAIT.
WHAT?

KA-THUNK



PRETTY SURE ASSASSINATION IS STILL **ILLEGAL** IN THIS STATE!



DO YOU HAVE **ANY IDEA** WHO YOU JUST LET GET AWAY?

YOUR MOTHER?



THAT JOKE DOESN'T EVEN MAKE SENSE IN THIS CONTEXT!



DOES IT EVER?



THAT WAS A **BLACK MARKET ARMS DEALER!** BY SAVING HIS LIFE, YOU HAVE SENTENCED HUNDREDS TO DIE!



MORALITY IS COMPLICATED. I GET IT.



OH WELL.
WHATEVER. I DID
WHAT I COULD.

AHH. THE
SIMPLE AND
UNCOMPLICATED
PLEASURES OF
SENDING
MAIL.



I BOW TO
THE SUPERIOR
COMPETITION.



I SUPPOSE THIS IS IT.
MY LAST DAY IN THE
MORTAL PLANE. NOT TO
MENTION NEW YORK.



BUT TO BE HONEST,
I DON'T MIND DYING.

THE NEXT DAY.

IT'S NOT EXISTING THAT BOTHERS ME.

THE NEXT DAY.

IT'S NOT EXISTING THAT BOTHERS ME.

A man with blonde hair and a beard, wearing a purple long-sleeved shirt, is lying in bed. He is holding a black smartphone in his right hand and looking at the screen. His eyes are closed, suggesting he is tired or asleep. The background shows a dark room with a window blind. A speech bubble is positioned above the man's head.

I CAN'T HELP BUT FEEL LIKE I'M LEAVING THE THEATER WITH FIVE MINUTES STILL LEFT IN THE MOVIE.

A comic book panel showing a man with blonde hair lying in bed, looking thoughtful. A speech bubble contains the text: "I HAD A GOOD TIME, BUT THERE'RE SOME QUESTIONS I'D STILL LIKE TO HAVE ANSWERED."



LIKE...WHAT
COULD I HAVE DONE
DIFFERENTLY?

WHAT *SHOULD*
I HAVE DONE
DIFFERENTLY.

COULD I HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY?

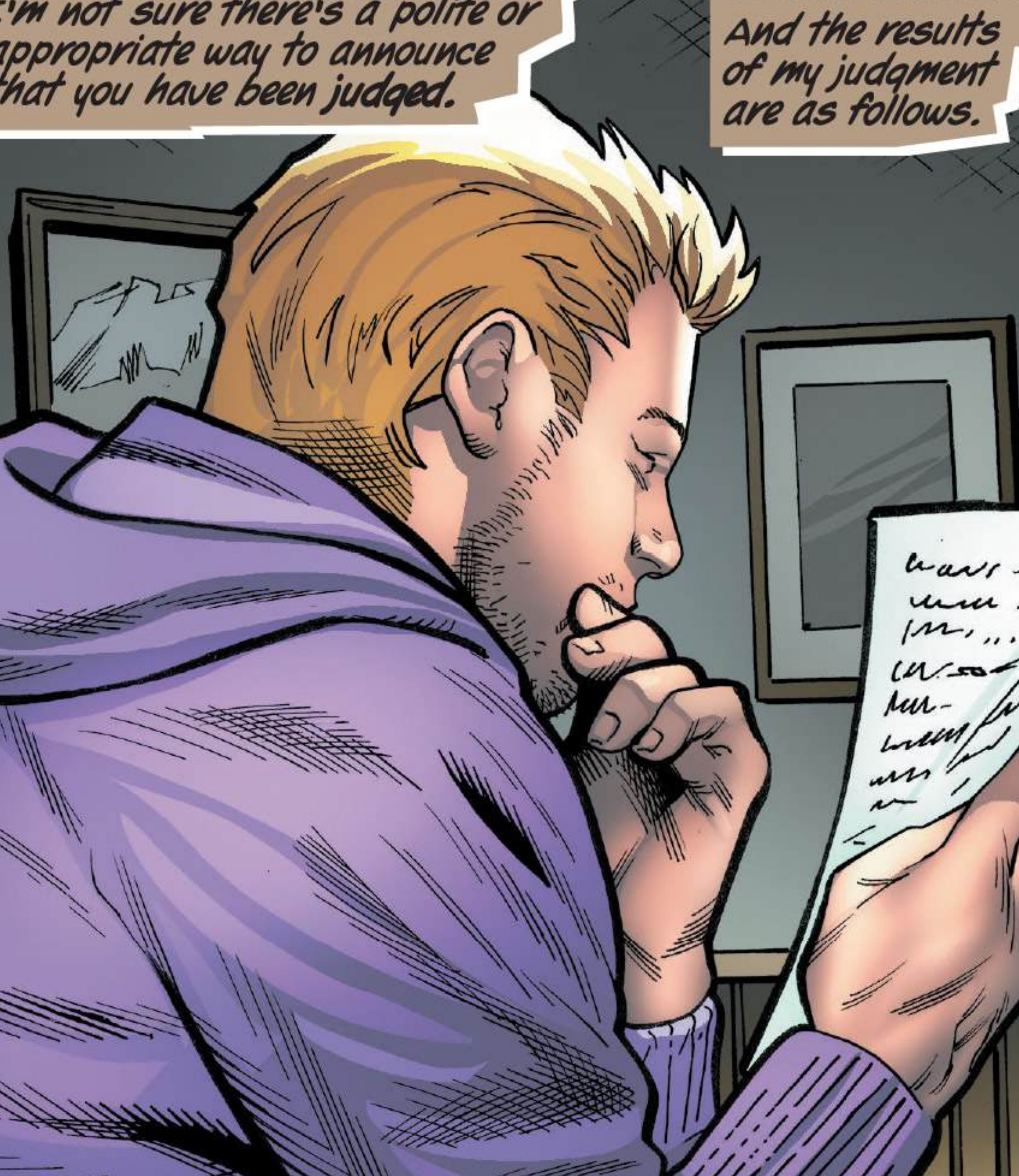
WHAT *SHOULD* I HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY.



Clint Barton
189 Sherwood St.
Brooklyn, NY 11216

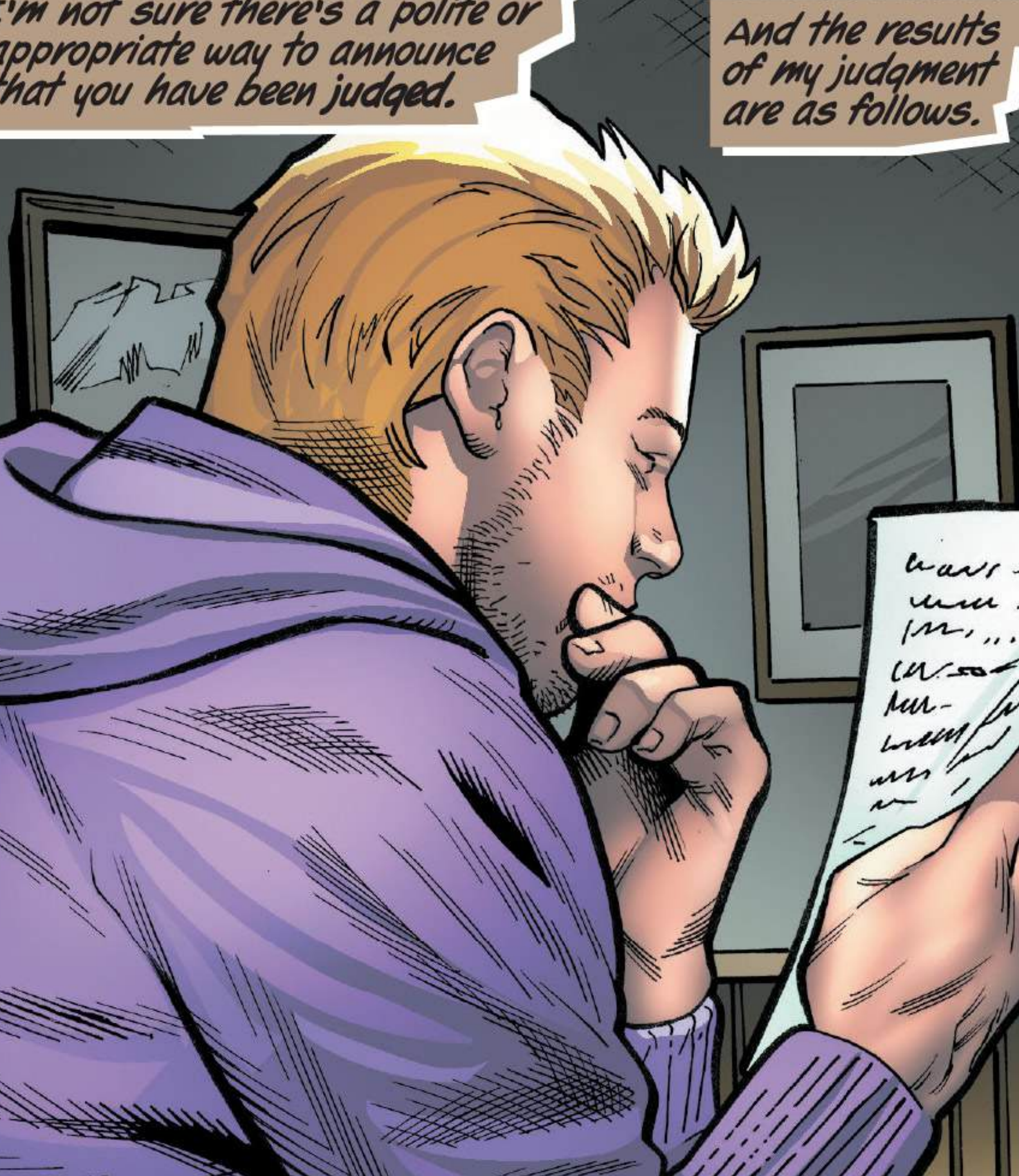
Dear Clint,
Is it weird that I call you "dear"?
I'm not sure there's a polite or
appropriate way to announce
that you have been judged.

And the results
of my judgment
are as follows.

A man with blonde hair, wearing a purple hoodie, is shown in profile, looking down at a letter he is holding. He has a thoughtful or perhaps slightly nervous expression, with his hand near his mouth. The letter is white with handwritten text in black ink. The background is a simple room with a framed picture on the wall. The overall style is that of a comic book illustration, with bold lines and a limited color palette.

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Is it weird that I call you "dear"?
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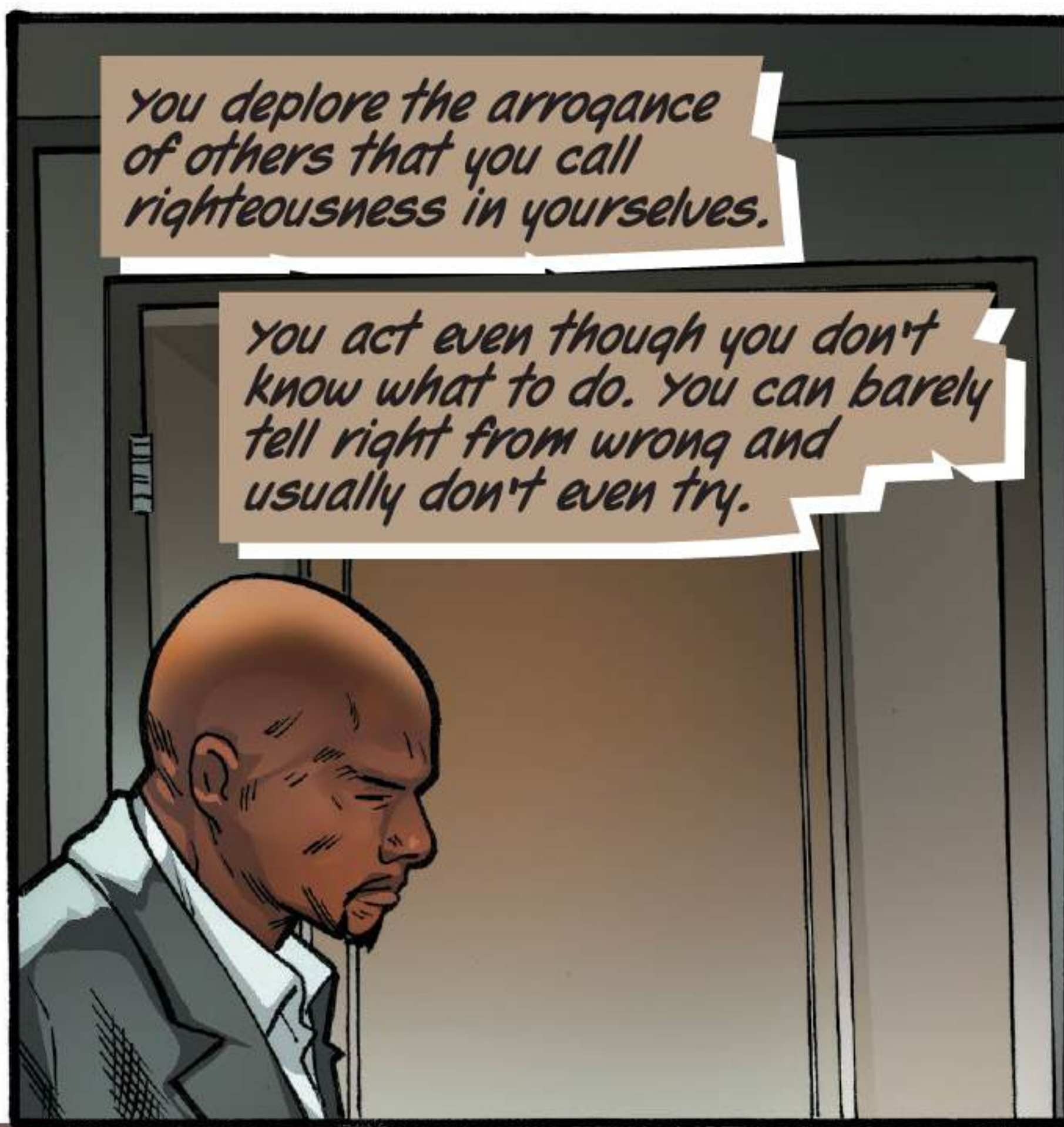
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I've been watching closely. As expected, I have found your species to be self-absorbed and violent.

GOODBYE, CLINT.

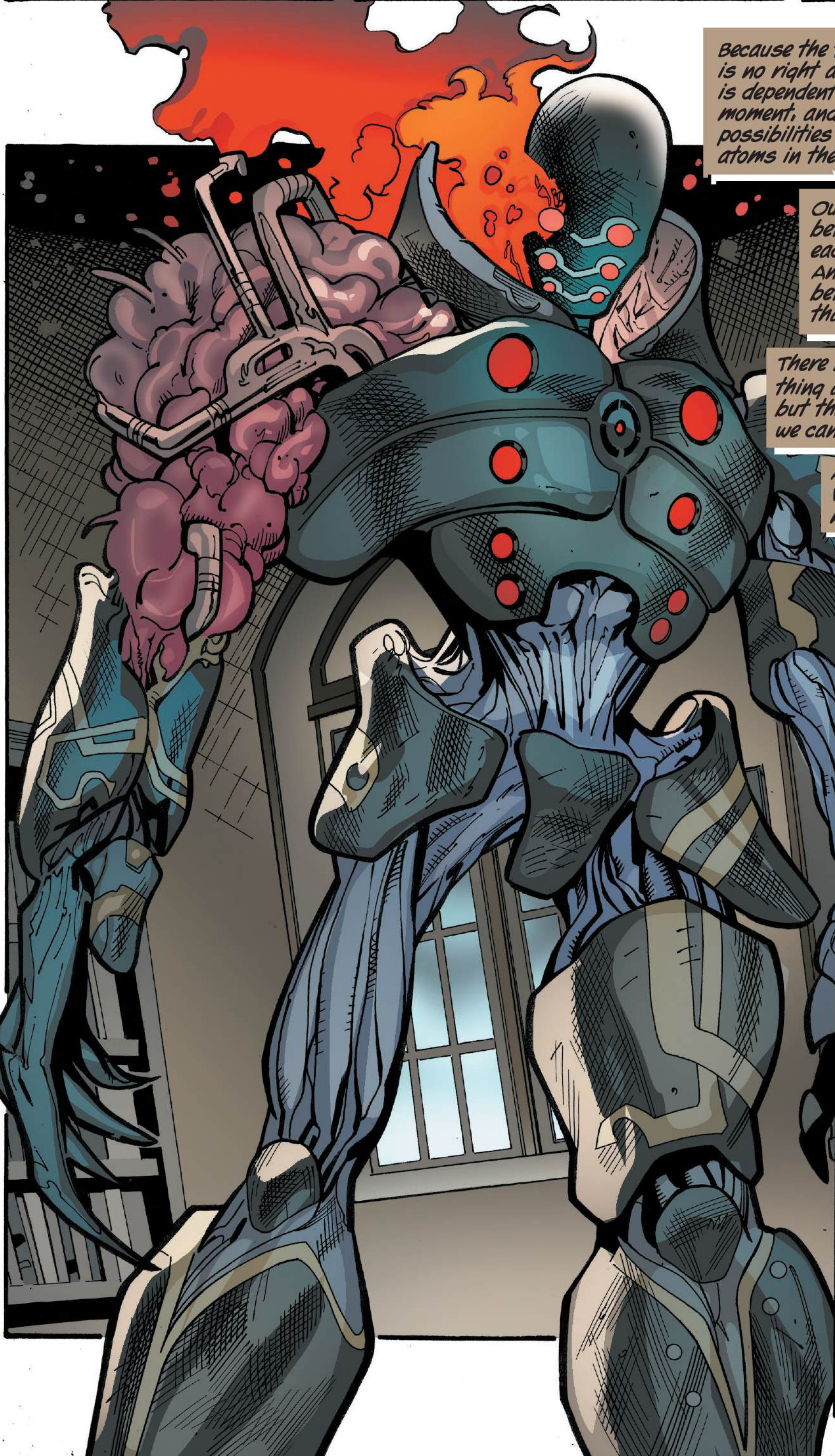


you deplore the arrogance of others that you call righteousness in yourselves.

you act even though you don't know what to do. you can barely tell right from wrong and usually don't even try.



But, to be fair, that is a trick question.



Because the truth is that there is no right answer. Every decision is dependent upon the needs of the moment, and there are more possibilities to consider than atoms in the universe.

Our only hope is to become better and smarter beings each time it is asked of us. And the only way to become better people is to keep asking that question of ourselves.

There may not be any such thing as moral clarity, but that doesn't mean we can't grow.

And you have grown. Which, apparently, a mailbox cannot do.

So my judgment is that you pass. You will live.

But we'll be watching from time to time, Clint. So my advice is to act as if someone is always watching.



Until you are wise enough to act as though no one is.

61 HISTORY'S MIGHTIEST HEROES PART FOUR
"THE DAY OF THE MAYFLY"





I DON'T SPEND A LOTTA
TIME READING. MOSTLY
BECAUSE IT TENDS TO
INVOLVE *SITTING STILL*.

BUT THE *CELESTIAL* I LIVE
INSIDE...SOMETIMES IT *TELLS*
ME THINGS. THINGS IT THINKS
I OUGHTA KNOW.

DID YOU KNOW THAT ONCE A
DRAGONFLY TAKES FLIGHT, IT
LIVES FOR ABOUT FOUR MONTHS?

OR THAT SOME BEES
LIVE FOR ONLY A FEW
WEEKS? TIME SPENT
LITERALLY WORKING
THEMSELVES
TO DEATH, FOR THE
SAKE OF THEIR HIVE.

OR HOW ABOUT THE *MAYFLY*,
WHICH EMERGES FROM THE
WATER WITH A GRAND TOTAL
OF *24 HOURS* IN WHICH TO
ENJOY BEING ALIVE?

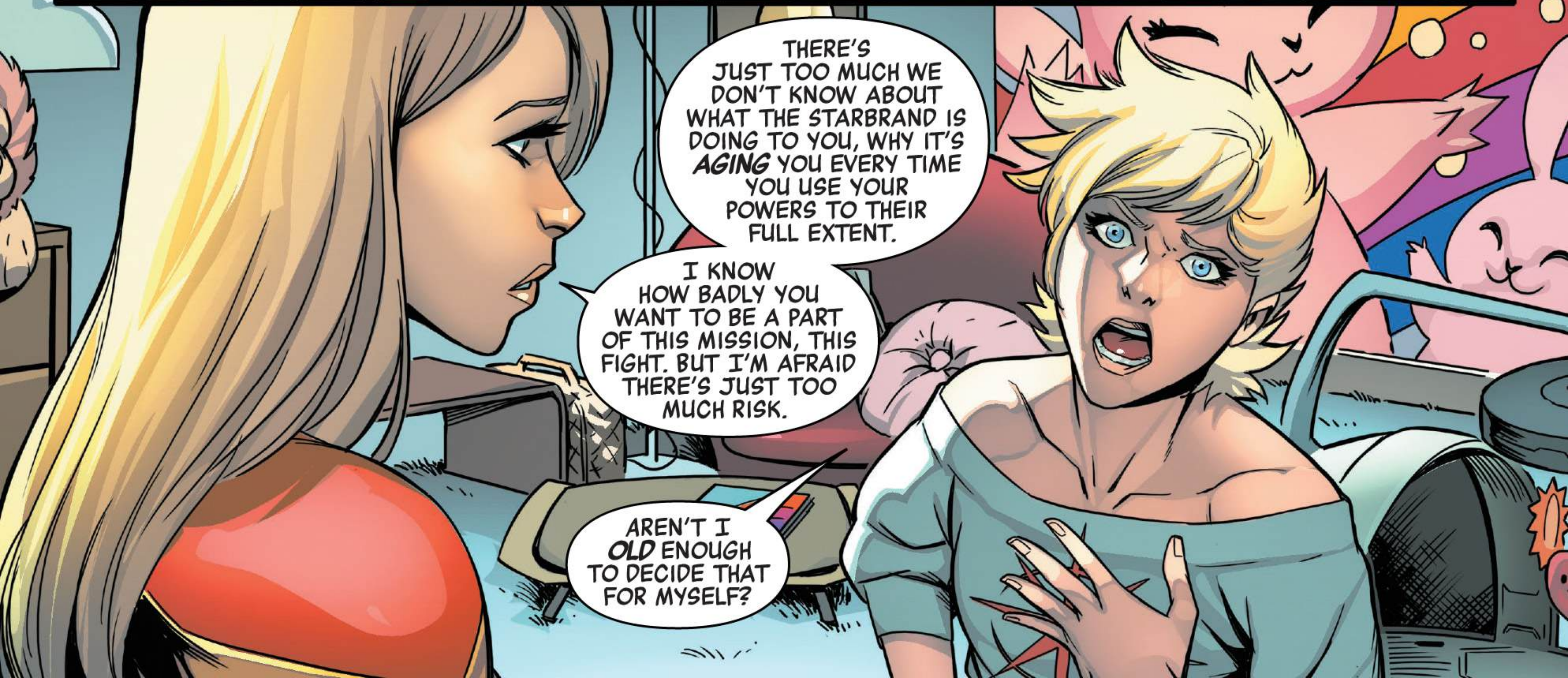
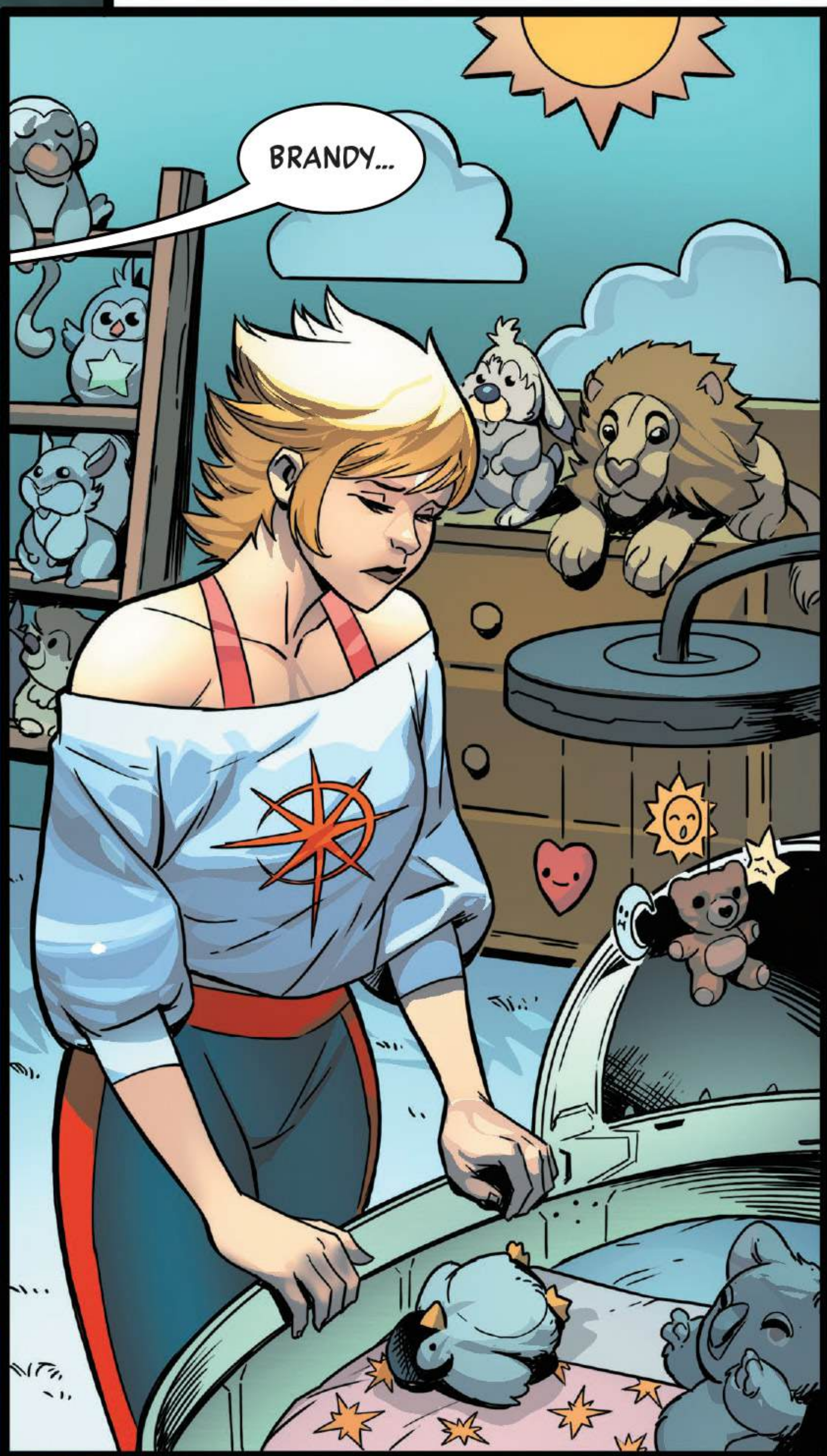
THE *MAYFLY* DOESN'T
EVEN BOTHER DEVELOPING A
MOUTH...SINCE IT WON'T LIVE
LONG ENOUGH TO GET TO EAT.

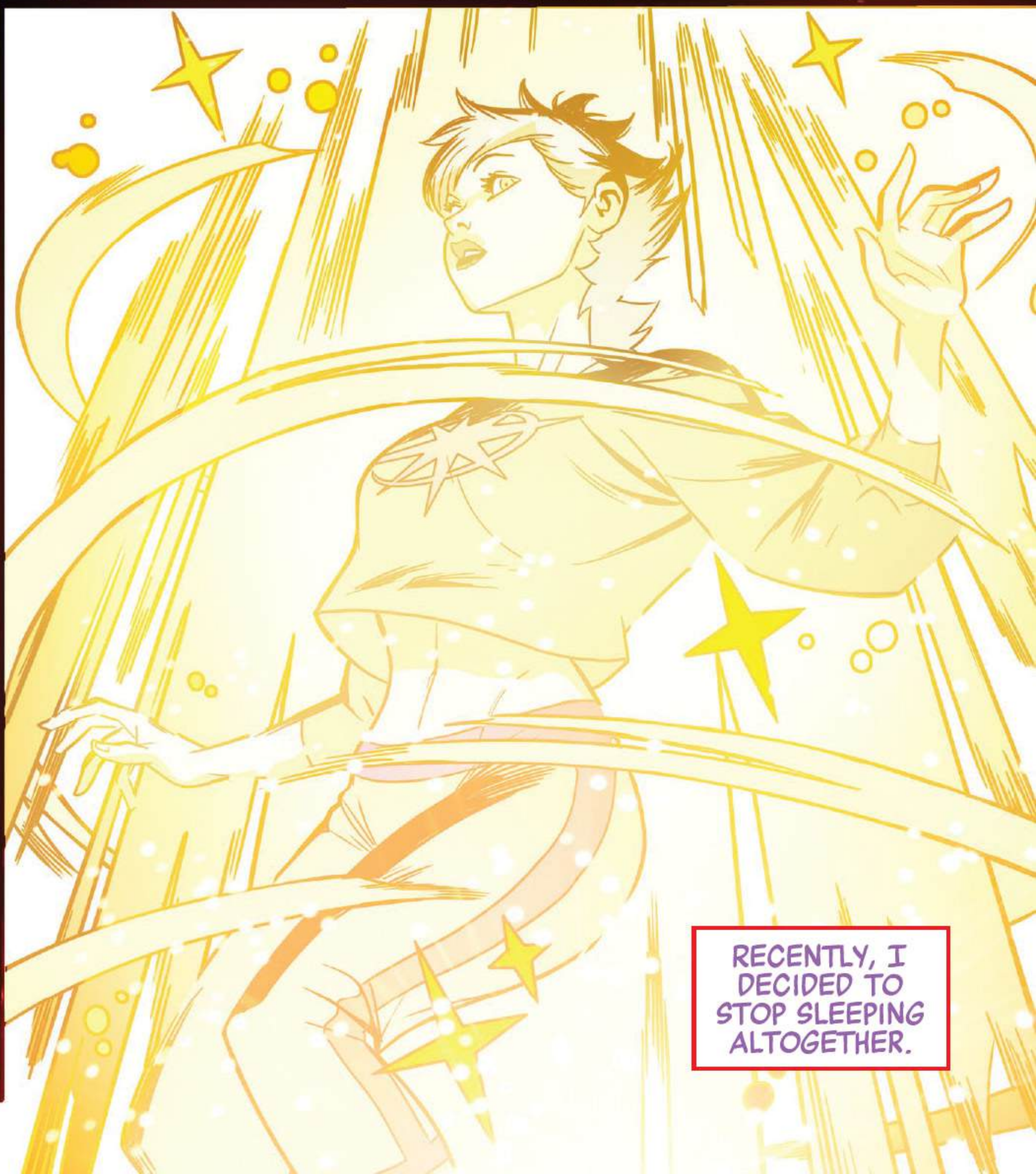
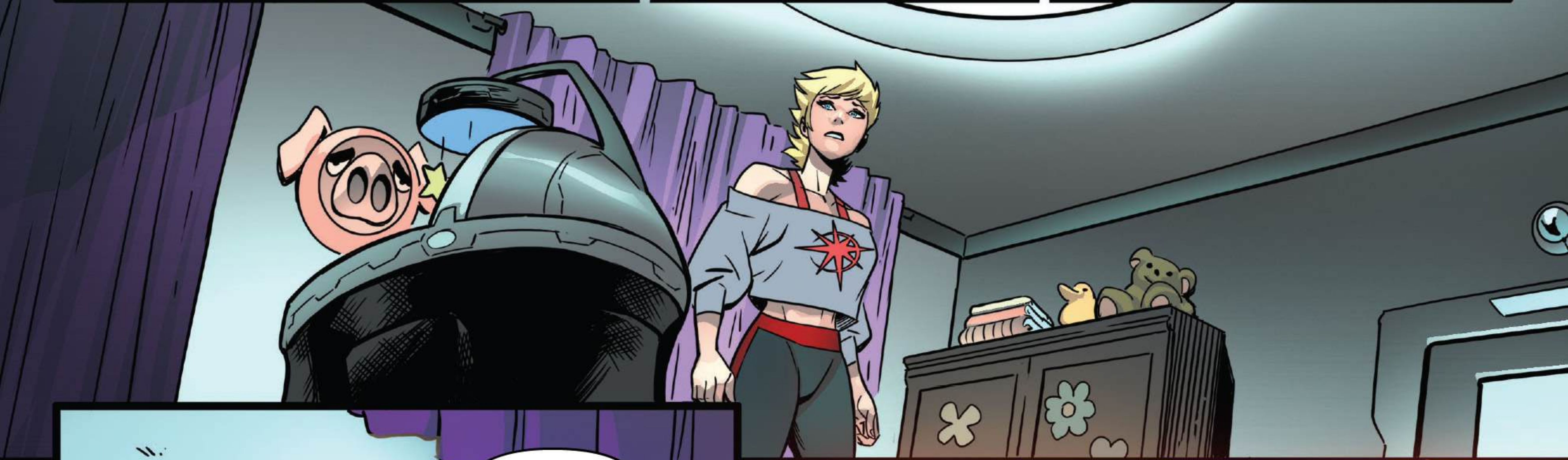
THAT'S IT,
STARBRAND!
HIT ME! WITH ALL
THE POWER
YOU'VE GOT!
HA-HAA!

A FEW WEEKS
AGO, I WAS
SLEEPING
IN A *CRIB*.

GUUGH!

EARLIER.





1047.
THE VIKING AGE.

AND THERE CAME A DAY, A DAY UNLIKE ANY OTHER, WHEN EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES FOUND THEMSELVES UNITED AGAINST A COMMON THREAT.

MURKFOOT, THE
APEMAN MYSTIC, THE
SASQUATCH
SORCERER SUPREME.

BODOLF THE BLACK,
THE STRONGEST VIKING
THERE EVER WAS.

THEODOSIA SZARDOS, THE WITCH
WHO WAS BURNED AT THE STAKE
AND NEVER STOPPED BURNING, WHO
BECAME A HUNTER OF WITCHES,
POSSESSED BY A POWER FROM
BEYOND THE STARS, THE PHOENIX
WITCH OF WUNDAGORE.

NEHANDA, THE
RENEGADE PANTHER,
AND HER LOVER, PRINCESS
GALE, THE OUTLAW
ATLANTIAN IRON FIST.

THE WILD-HEARTED THOR,
PRINCE OF THUNDER, WHO
HAD ONLY RECENTLY HEFTED
HIS HAMMER, MJOLNIR,
FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME.

WITH
ME! FOR
MIDGARD!

THE MYSTERIOUS
GRIZZLY RIDER
OF CAHOKIA.

ON THAT DAY, THE
AVENGERS WERE BORN.
TO FIGHT THE FOE NO
SINGLE HERO COULD--



**1924.
HONG KONG.**

LET'S
GIVE 'EM
THE WOIKS,
BIG IRON!

**KNUCKLES
O'SHAUGHNESSY,
DEAD-END KID SPIRIT
OF VENGEANCE.**

**GRANDMASTER
WONG, CHINA'S
MIGHTIEST
HERO, MASTER
OF SHAOLIN
HUNG GA AND
OF THE ELEVENTH
SPECIAL FIST:**

**THE DRUNKEN
DRAGON FIST.**

BARE-KNUCKS
AND THE OL' HELLFIRE
HUMDINGER!

YOUSE
DEVIL-FIENDIN'
MUGS DON'T STAND
A CHANCE AGAINST THE
TOUGHEST COUPLA
SUPER-PALOOKAS
THIS SIDE OF--



MEPHISTO!
GIVE IT UP! YOU
CAN'T STOP WHAT'S
COMING FOR
YOU!

YOU
CAN'T STOP
ME!



HEH...

WHO SAYS
I WANT TO,
BRANDY?



WE ARE HUGE ADMIRERS,
SHIFU. MAY WE JUST
SAY, IT WAS A
PLEASURE TO WATCH
YOU WORK.

HEY, WHAT
AM I, FRIED
BALONEY OVER
HERE?



HER
BLOOD IS HOT
LIKE THE SUN. HER
COURAGE IS AS
STRONG AS IRON.

CAN
WE GO
ALREADY?

66 MILLION YEARS AGO.

"WE ARE... OFFICIALLY LOST."



LOST WITHIN OUR EARTH'S TIMELINE. WE JUST OVERSHOT OUR TARGET BY A GOOD 65 MILLION YEARS.

MEPHISTO'S MEDDLING WITH HISTORICAL EVENTS IS CREATING **INTERFERENCE**, SCRAMBLING OUR TIME JUMPS.

WE CAN'T KEEP PLAYING MEPHISTO'S GAME. WE'LL BE CHASING HIM THROUGH THE ERAS FOR ALL ETERNITY.

WHAT CHOICE DO WE HAVE? IF WE DON'T STOP HIM, HE COULD UNRAVEL OUR OWN EXISTENCE RIGHT BEFORE OUR EYES.

MAYBE THEY COULD USE YOUR OPINION OVER THERE. I KNOW YOU'VE GOT ONE.

THEY NEVER WANTED ME OR MY OPINION ON THIS MISSION. I'M ONLY HERE BECAUSE THE CELESTIAL SAW THE TRUTH.

THE ONLY TRUTH I SEE IS THAT YOU'RE GONNA **BURN** YOURSELF OUT IF YOU TRY TO KEEP UP THIS PACE.



OR MAYBE THAT'S YOUR PLAN.

YOU'RE THE LADY WHO SEES ALL OUR **DEATH-BALLS**, RIGHT? SO YOU TELL ME, VALKYRIE.

I'M THE LADY WHO BEAT DEATH INTO **REMISION**, ONE CHEMO SESSION AT A TIME. WHOSE DAY JOB IS WORKING IN A **MORGUE**.

THAT WE'RE ALL A BUNCHA MAYFLIES?

THAT NOTHING IN ALL THE REALMS OR HEAVENS IS MORE PRECIOUS THAN **LIFE**. ALL THE MORE PRECIOUS BECAUSE OF HOW GLORIOUSLY **INSIGNIFICANT** WE MIGHT SEEM TO BE.

NOTHING IS MORE FRAGILE AND YET RESILIENT. MORE EXCRUCIATING AND BEAUTIFUL, ALL AT ONCE.

I'M NOT AFRAID TO DIE.

YOU MAKE THAT ABUNDANTLY CLEAR. NOW TRY NOT BEING AFRAID TO **LIVE**.

ASK MEPHISTO'S SPIDERS OVER THERE IF I LOOKED AFRAID?

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THERE'S MORE TO LIFE THAN PUNCHING THINGS.

AND WHO SPENDS HER FREE TIME FERRYING DEAD SOULS TO THE GREAT BEYOND. SO I'M LITERALLY **SURROUNDED** BY DEATH EVERY WAKING MOMENT.

AND DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT'S **TAUGHT** ME, STARBRAND?

EVERYTHING HAS A PLACE IN THE AFTERLIFE, NO MATTER HOW SMALL. EVEN THOSE **MAYFLIES** YOU MENTIONED. THE ONES THAT DON'T LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO GROW A MOUTH.

YOU KNOW WHAT'S ALWAYS ON THEIR TINY LITTLE MINDS, AS I'M FERRYING SWARMS OF THEM TO THE INSECT NETHER-REALM?

"I SURE WISH I COULD'VE TASTED SOME NECTAR WHEN I HAD THE CHANCE."



MEPHISTO
WANTS US GOING
MAD OUT HERE.
LOSING OURSELVES
TO ANGER AND
FRUSTRATION.
TO...

...TEMPTATION.
FORGETTING WHO
WE ARE. WE ONLY BEAT
HIM BY STAYING TRUE
TO OUR BEST
SELVES.

NOT BY
OUTKILLING HIM.
BY OUTLIVING THE
BASTARD.

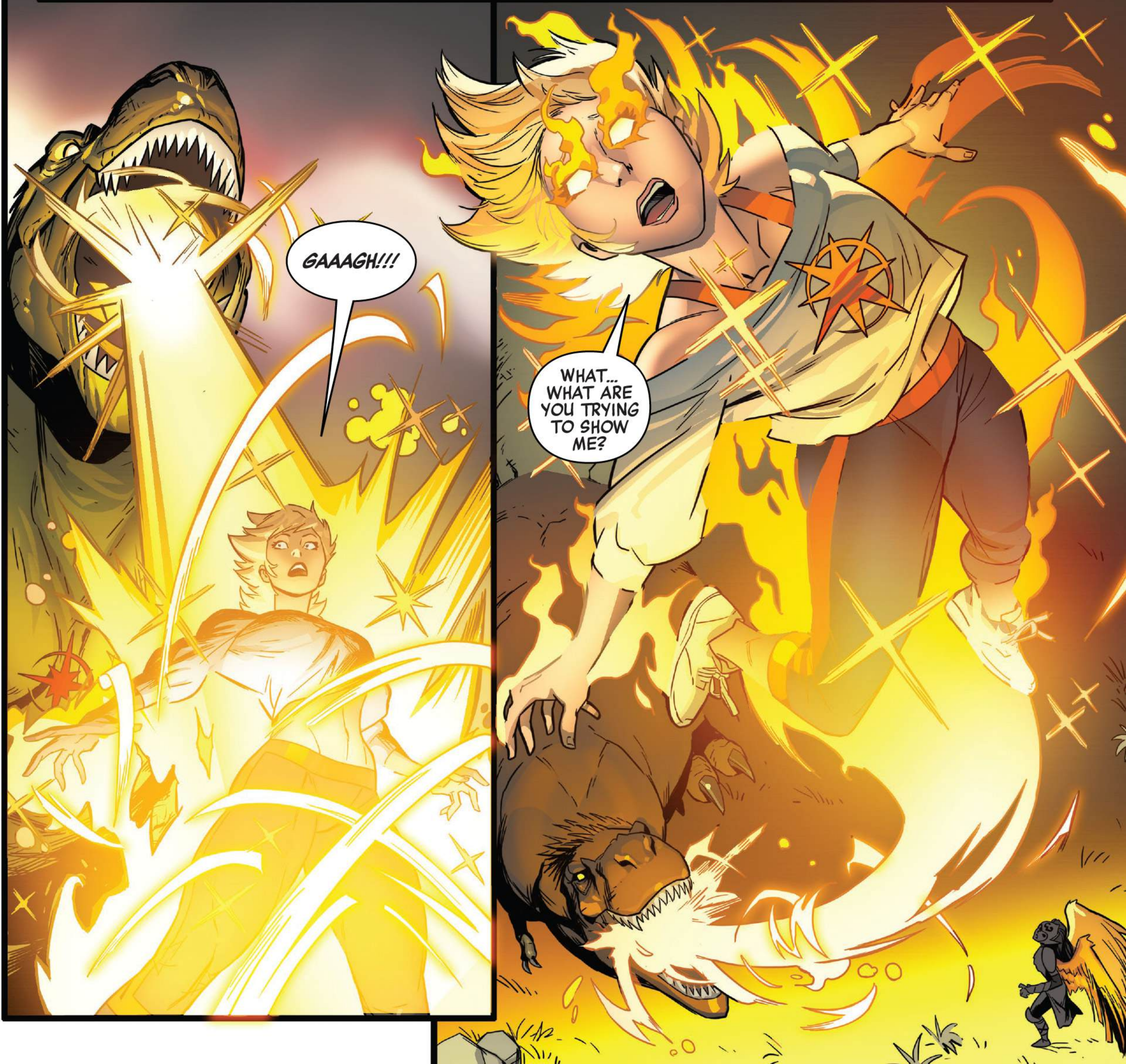
ARE YOU
PAYING ATTENTION
AS WE GO TUMBLING
THROUGH HISTORY? I'M
SEEING ALL SORTS OF
IRON FISTS AND
GHOST RIDERS AND
BLACK PANTHERS.



BUT THE
STARBRANDS--
WE'RE A RARE
BUNCH.

BECAUSE
WE'RE BUILT TO
BURN HOT.

WE DON'T
HAVE TIME TO
GIVE A DAMN
ABOUT--



GAAAGH!!!

WHAT...
WHAT ARE
YOU TRYING
TO SHOW
ME?



"THE METEOR THAT WIPED OUT THE DINOSAURS. THAT'S HOW THE STARBRAND FIRST CAME TO EARTH.

"THAT'S HOW THIS *T. REX* GOT HIS POWERS AND BECAME THE PLANET'S FIRST PROTECTOR. THAT'S HOW..."



THAT'S HOW HE OUTLIVED...

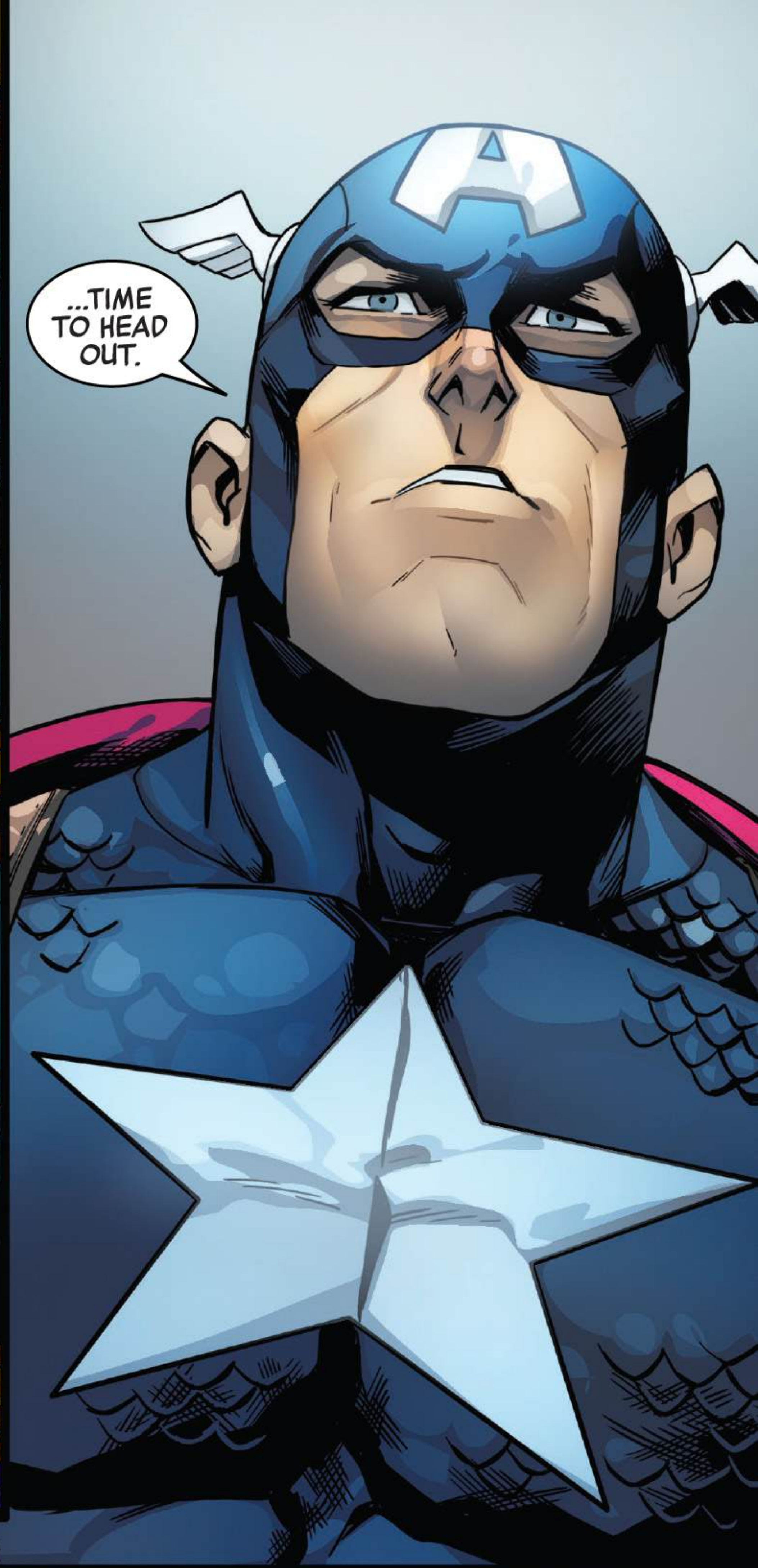
...EVERYTHING HE'D EVER KNOWN.



I'M LUCKY,
HE SAYS, BECAUSE
I HAVE...OTHERS
LIKE ME.

I HAVE...

AVENGERS...



...TIME
TO HEAD
OUT.



BRANDY?

JUST A
FEW MORE
MINUTES,
CAP.

I MEAN,
WE'VE GOT A
TIME MACHINE,
RIGHT?

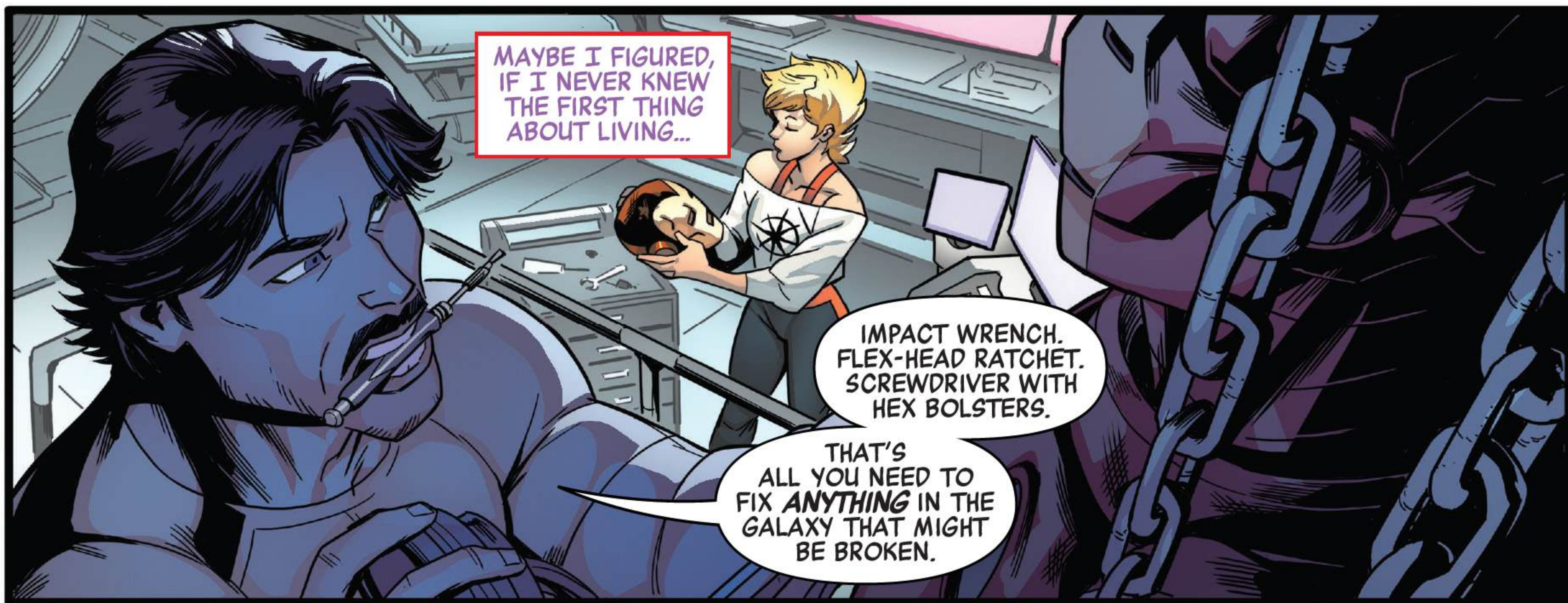
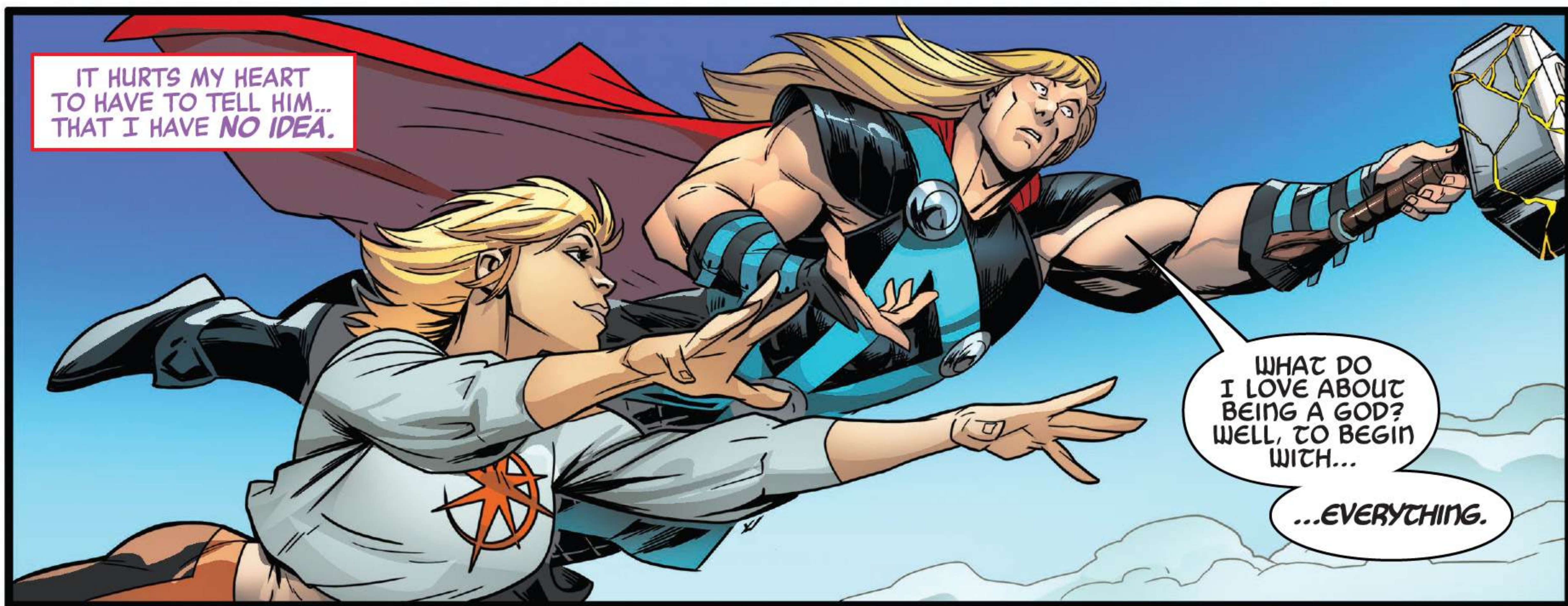


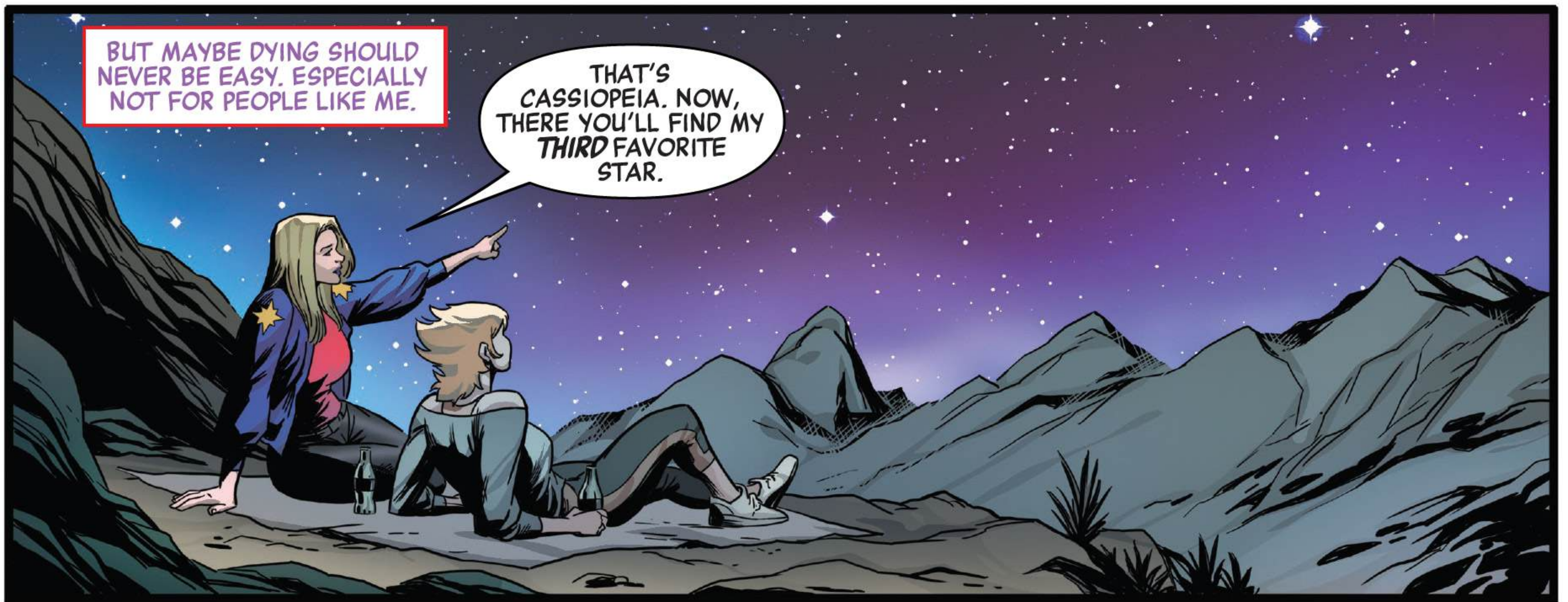
SO
WHAT'S OUR
HURRY?

WE SHARE OUR
THOUGHTS THROUGH
THE BRAND.

HE WANTS TO KNOW
WHAT THE WORLD
WILL BECOME, WHAT
HIS SACRIFICE WILL
HELP CREATE.

HE WANTS TO
KNOW WHAT MY
PEOPLE ARE LIKE.







LIFE IS ONE
HELL OF A
FIGHT.

IT JUST HELPS TO
KNOW WHAT YOU'RE
FIGHTING FOR.

MEPHISTO
HAS GUNMEN IN
THE CLOUDS! HE'S
TARGETING THE
WILD WEST
PHOENIX!

MEPHISTO
IS MINE!

BRANDY,
WAIT!

1868.
THE AMERICAN WEST.



GUUGH!

IT HELPS TO
KNOW WHERE
TO PUNCH.



HA! YOU
HAVEN'T LEARNED
A THING, HAVE YOU?
STILL JUST A
FRIGHTENED
CHILD!



A FEW WEEKS
AGO, YEAH, I
WAS SLEEPING
IN A CRIB.

BUT I
DON'T SLEEP
ANYMORE!



HRRGGH!

WHAT...
WHAT ARE
YOU DOING?

GAARGGH!!!

GUURGH!

HA HA! YES!
PUNCH AWAY,
YOU FOOL! YOU KNOW
NOT WHAT YOU
DO, CHILD!

BELIEVE
ME, I
KNOW.

I KNOW
WHAT I WAS
BORN TO DO.



I AM THE
STARBRAND.



THAT'S THE
ONLY NAME
I'VE EVER HAD.



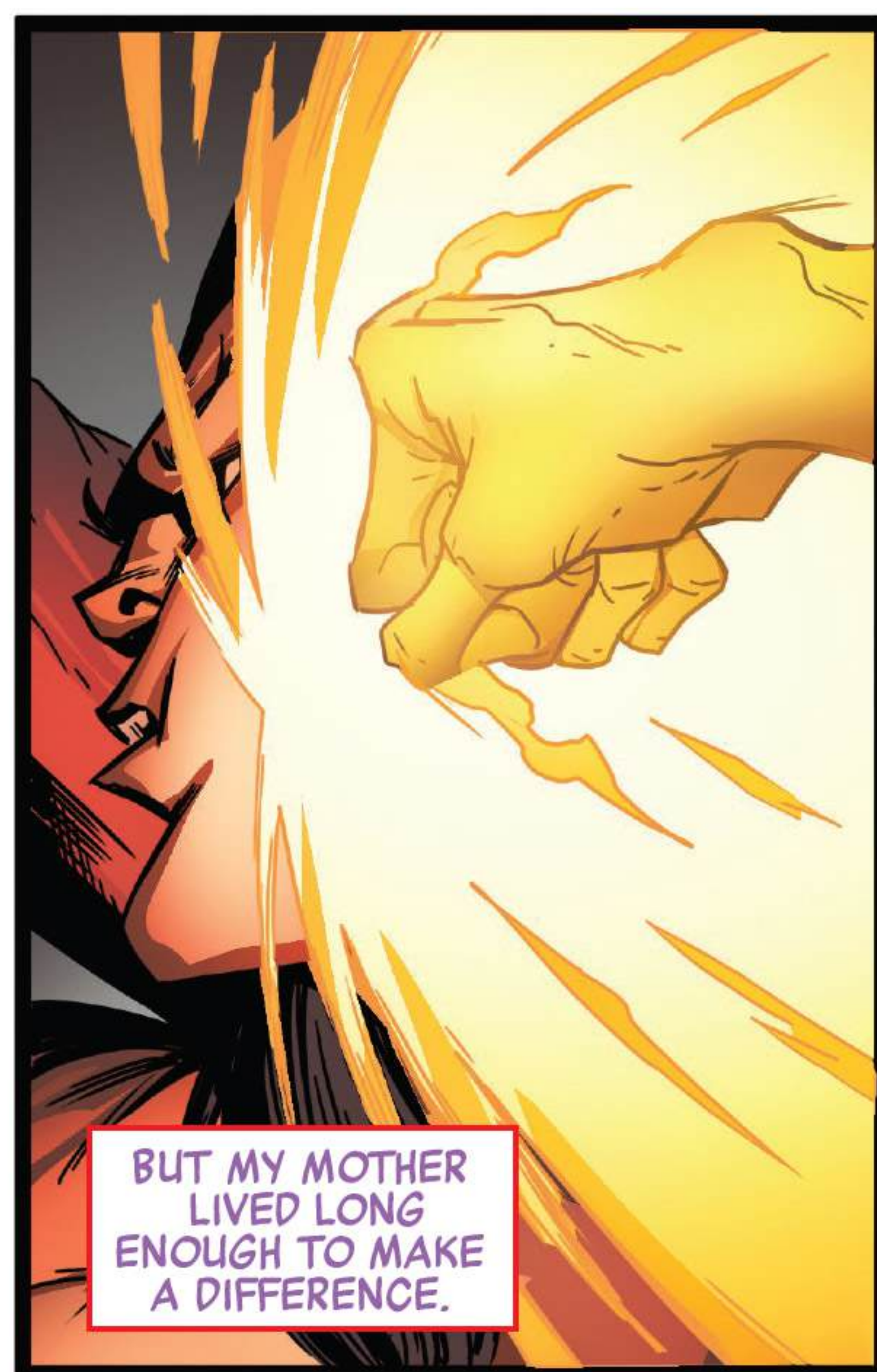
MY MOTHER
DIDN'T LIVE LONG
ENOUGH TO GIVE
ME ANOTHER.



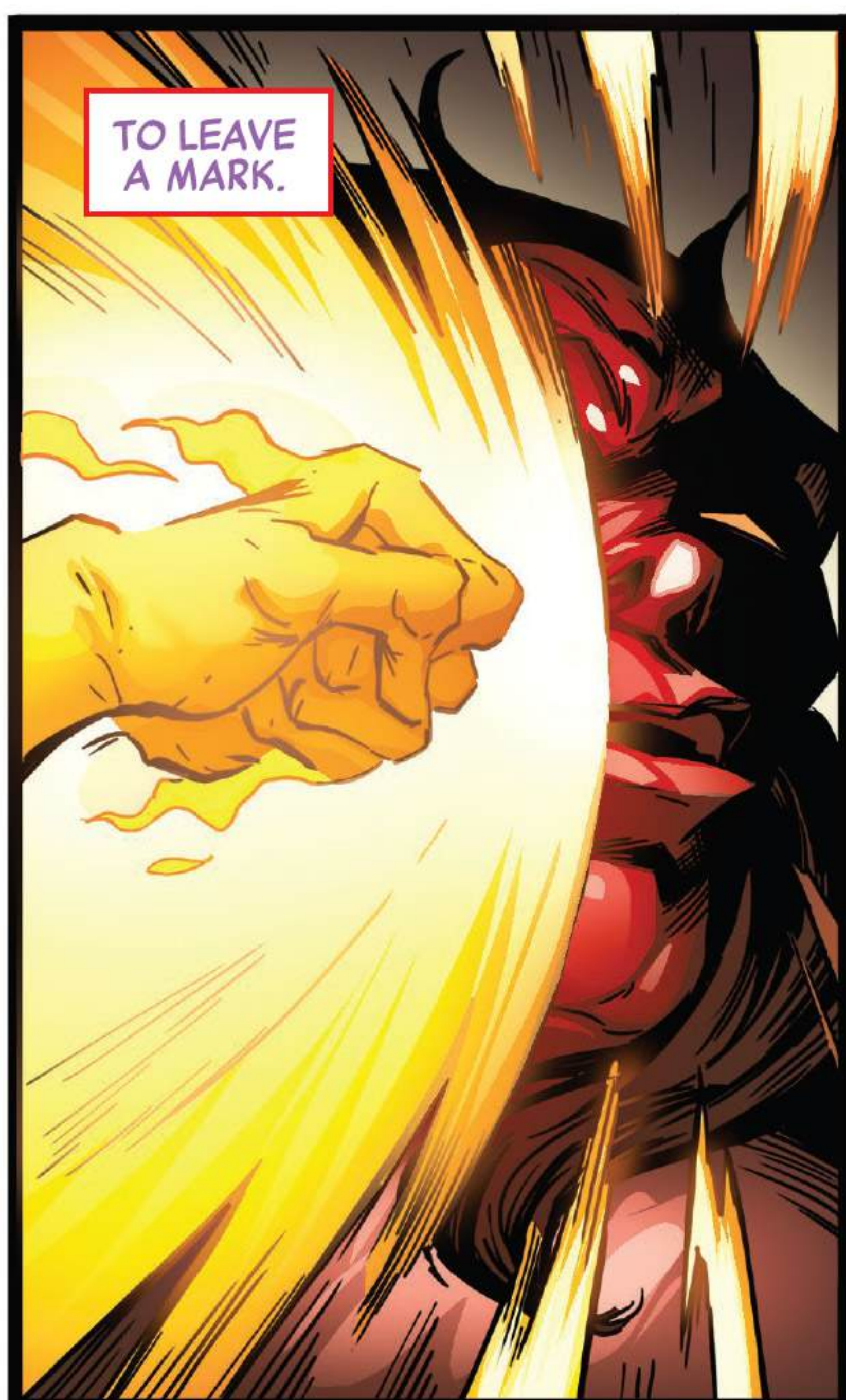
NOT EVERYONE
GETS TO BE AROUND
AS LONG AS THOR.



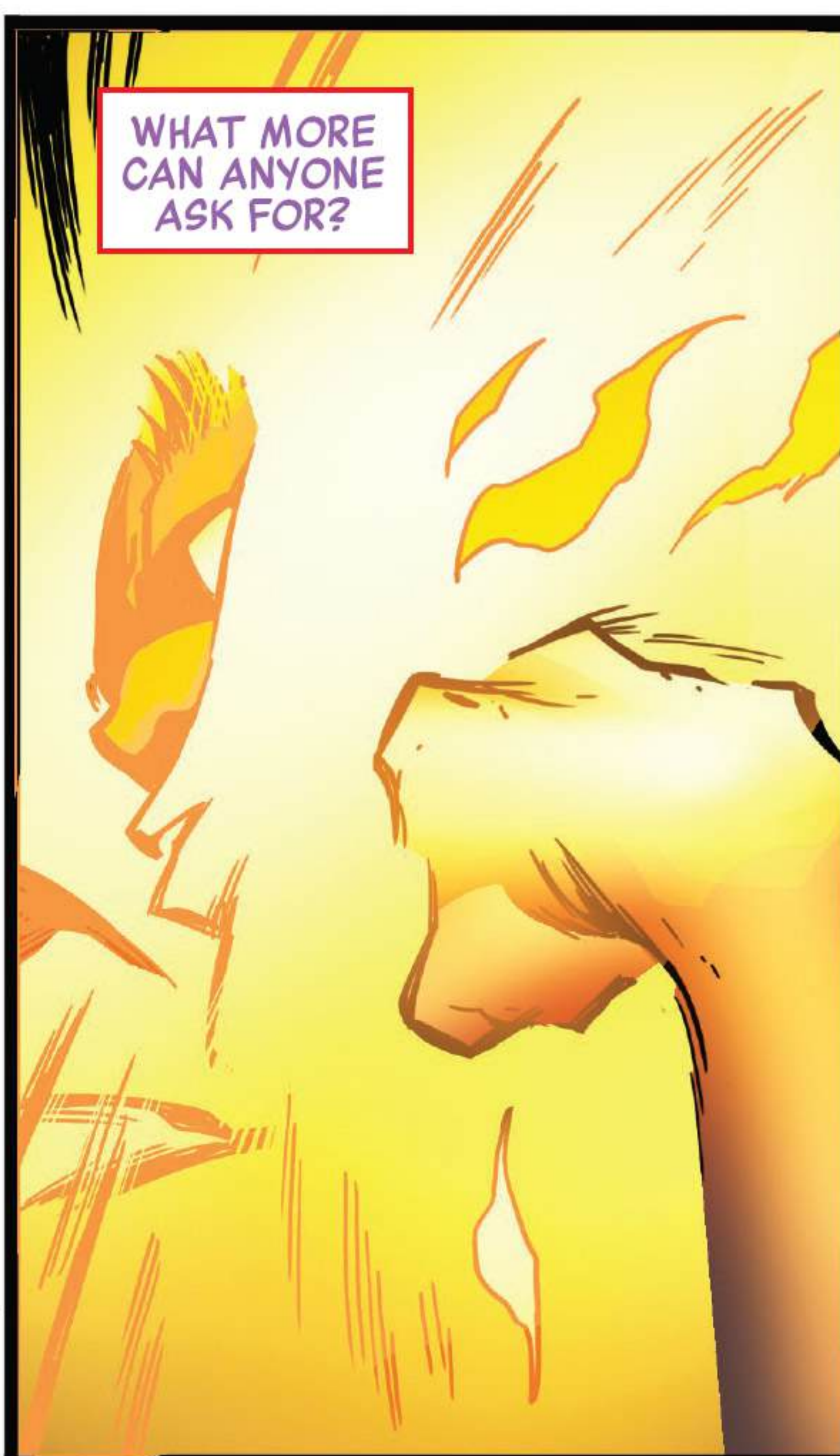
SOMETIMES YOU'RE
JUST A MAYFLY
SURROUNDED BY GODS.



BUT MY MOTHER
LIVED LONG
ENOUGH TO MAKE
A DIFFERENCE.



TO LEAVE
A MARK.



WHAT MORE
CAN ANYONE
ASK FOR?



I LOVE YOU,
MOMMA.



WHAT JUST HAPPENED?

I WAS GUNNING IT OUT WITH SOME COWBOYS AND THEN...

WHERE ARE WE? WHAT TIME PERIOD IS THIS?

CARBON READINGS SHOW...

WE'RE HERE. THE TARGET ERA.

THE PREHISTORIC GENESIS POINT.

BUT HOW...?

IT WAS STARBRAND. SHE WENT AFTER MEPHISTO.

SHE UNLEASHED THE FULL EXTENT OF HER POWER.

OH NO. WHERE IS SHE?

BRANDY!

IT WAS EASY.

I JUST... PUNCHED OUR WAY HERE.

BRANDY?

BUT MEPHISTO... HE'S NOT FINISHED. SO... I THINK YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS... WHAT HAPPENS NOW...



AVENGERS
ASSEMBLE.

A FEW WEEKS AGO,
I WAS SLEEPING IN
A CRIB.

NOW I'M HERE,
AT THE CRADLE
OF THE WORLD.

WITH EARTH'S
MIGHTIEST
HEROES.

AND ONE LAST
CHANCE TO SAVE
ALL OF REALITY.

FEEL LIKE I'VE
STILL GOT A
COUPLE GOOD
PUNCHES LEFT
IN ME.

I PLAN ON
MAKING THEM
COUNT.

62 HISTORY'S MIGHTIEST HEROES CONCLUSION
"THE MAN WHO KEEPS IT WEIRD"



MANY YEARS AGO.
THE DAWN OF MAN.

SUCH A SIMPLE
CREATURE...IS THIS
PRIMITIVE MAN.

EVER DRIVEN TO
TERROR BY
EVERY LITTLE THING.

RRREEERRGH!!!



WHEN THE WIND
BLOWS. WHEN
THE SUN SHINES.
WHEN THE SUN
GOES AWAY.

WHEN ONE OF
THEIR OWN
LIES STRICKEN.

GHRRRK!

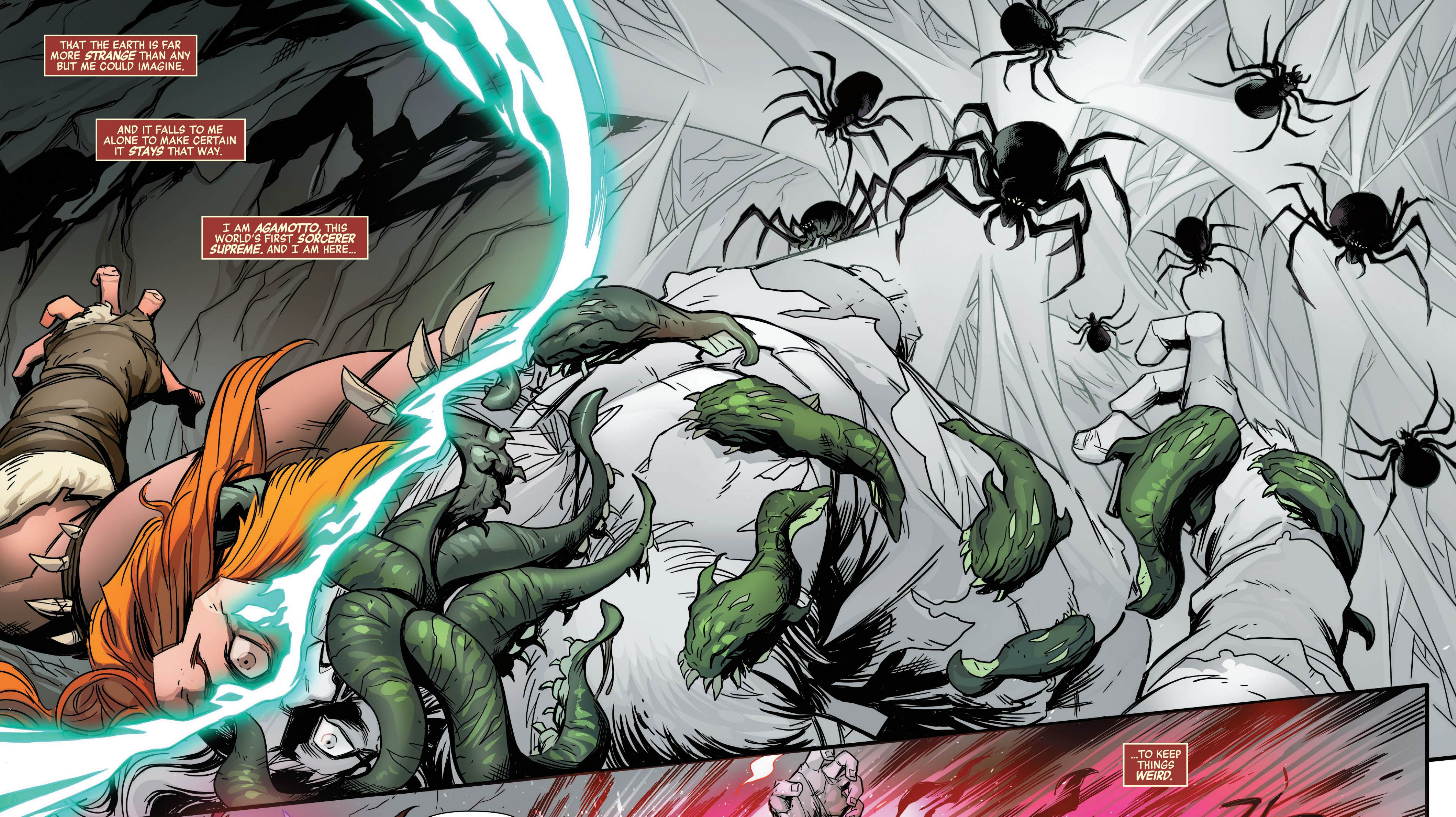


I SUPPOSE IT'S FOR THE BEST THAT
THEY EXIST IN A STATE OF SUCH
EASILY SPOOKED IGNORANCE, FOR
IT SAVES THEM FROM EVER EVEN
GLIMPING THE REAL TRUTH.

THAT THE EARTH IS FAR
MORE *STRANGE* THAN ANY
BUT ME COULD IMAGINE.

AND IT FALLS TO ME
ALONE TO MAKE CERTAIN
IT *STAYS* THAT WAY.

I AM AGAMOTTO, THIS
WORLD'S FIRST *SORCERER*
SUPREME. AND I AM HERE...



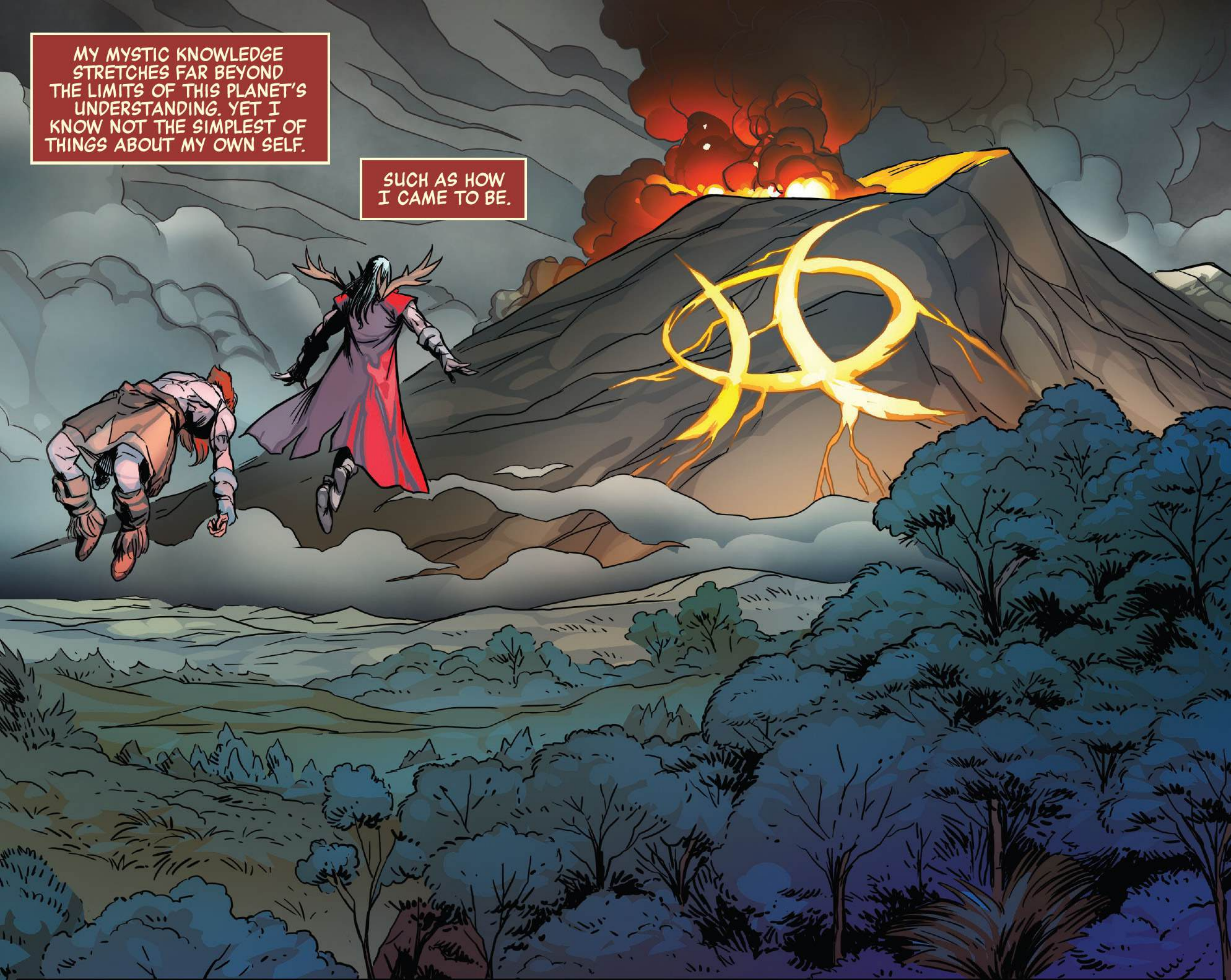
...TO KEEP
THINGS
WEIRD.

TRY TO
RELAX. THIS MIGHT
STING A BIT.



MY MYSTIC KNOWLEDGE
STRETCHES FAR BEYOND
THE LIMITS OF THIS PLANET'S
UNDERSTANDING. YET I
KNOW NOT THE SIMPLEST OF
THINGS ABOUT MY OWN SELF.

SUCH AS HOW
I CAME TO BE.



WAS I BORN AN *APE-MAN*, LIKE
THESE CRUDE, CAVE-DWELLING
PROTO-PEOPLE I PROTECT?

AM I A *SPIRIT* MADE FLESH?
THE TEAR OF AN ELDER GOD
GIVEN SENTENCE?

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I
DO NOT SPEND MUCH TIME
PONDERING SUCH QUESTIONS.



FOR IT IS NOT THE
PAST THAT MOST
CONCERNS ME.



THE EARTH HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN **ODD** LITTLE MUD BALL.

LIKE A PREDILECTION FOR THE BIZARRE IS BAKED INTO ITS DIRT. INTO THE FLESH OF ITS BEASTS.

QUITE THE COLLECTION OF NASTY **PARASITES** YOU PICKED UP.

THERE ARE THINGS OUT THERE FROM THE WICKEDEST OF REALMS THAT **FEED** ON JUST SUCH EXOTIC EMBRYOS.

MIND MAGGOTS. PURPLE FLESH-NESTERS. SOME MANNER OF NETHER-SQUID.

BUT I BELIEVE WE GOT THEM ALL. AND IF THESE **SOUL-STITCHES** HOLD, YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ANY **SPIRITUAL INFECTIONS**.

BUT WHEN THE DEVOURERS COME HERE, TEETH BARED, BELLIES GRUMBLING...ALL THEY GET A MOUTHFUL OF IS **ME**.

IT KEEPS ME... **OCCUPIED**.

SO...FEELING **BETTER**? DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'D LIKE A **TOUR** OF THE MYSTIC SANCTUM I'VE GOT HERE? I MEAN, IT'S NOT OFTEN I GET MANY--



AAAAAAIIIIHHH!!!

I PRY OTHERDIMENSIONAL LEECHES OFF THESE PEOPLE. I TEACH THEM WHICH HERBS TO USE TO HEAL THEMSELVES. WHICH TOADS TO LICK TO EXPAND THEIR MINDS.

BECAUSE I SEE WHERE THEIR TIMELINE LEADS. IN ALL THE MOST APPALLING AND INSPIRING DIRECTIONS.

HMPH. LET'S HOPE THEY DEVELOP SOME GRATTITUDE AFTER A FEW CENTURIES.

AND BECAUSE I'M THE ONLY SOUL ALIVE WHO CAN DO WHAT I DO. WHO CAN WALK WHERE I WALK.



IT'S AN *HONOR*, I TELL MYSELF. A PRIVILEGE TO GUARD THIS WORLD, I KNOW. IT'S JUST THAT SOME DAYS...

WELL, THEN. LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH.



...SOME DAYS, IT'S DOWNRIGHT *LONELY* BEING THE WEIRDEST MAN ALIVE.

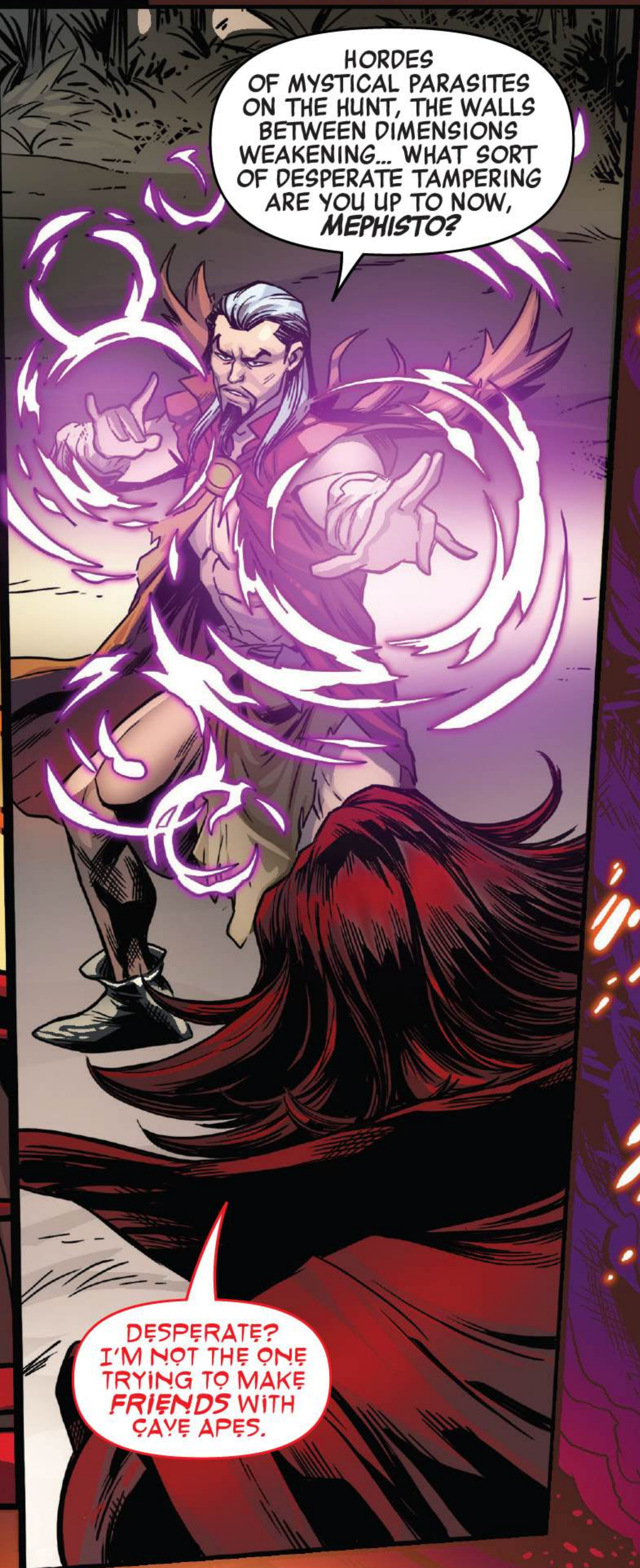
BY THE POWER OF THE VISHANTI, APPEAR BEFORE ME!



OH DEAR,
HOW VERY
PATHETIC.

I HATE TO
BREAK IT TO YOU,
AGAMOTTO, BUT THE
BEST YOU CAN HOPE FOR
IS THAT SOMEDAY THESE
MAN-BEASTS WILL BE
"ENLIGHTENED" ENOUGH
TO BURN YOU AT THE
STAKE AS A DEVIL-
WORSHIPPING
WARLOCK.

WON'T THAT
BE DELICIOUSLY
IRONIC?



HORDES
OF MYSTICAL PARASITES
ON THE HUNT, THE WALLS
BETWEEN DIMENSIONS
WEAKENING... WHAT SORT
OF DESPERATE TAMPERING
ARE YOU UP TO NOW,
MEPHISTO?

DESPERATE?
I'M NOT THE ONE
TRYING TO MAKE
FRIENDS WITH
CAVE APES.



MUST I
REMIND YOU HOW
MANY TIMES I'VE
DEFEATED YOU OVER
THE EONS?

OH, MORE
THAN I CARE
TO COUNT, NO
DOUBT.

THEN I
SUPPOSE YOU
CAN GUESS WHAT
HAPPENS NEXT.

YOU'RE THE
ONE WITH THE
MAGIC EYES,
SORCERER.



YOU TELL ME!

HE'S RIGHT. SUDDENLY, I SEE IT ALL.

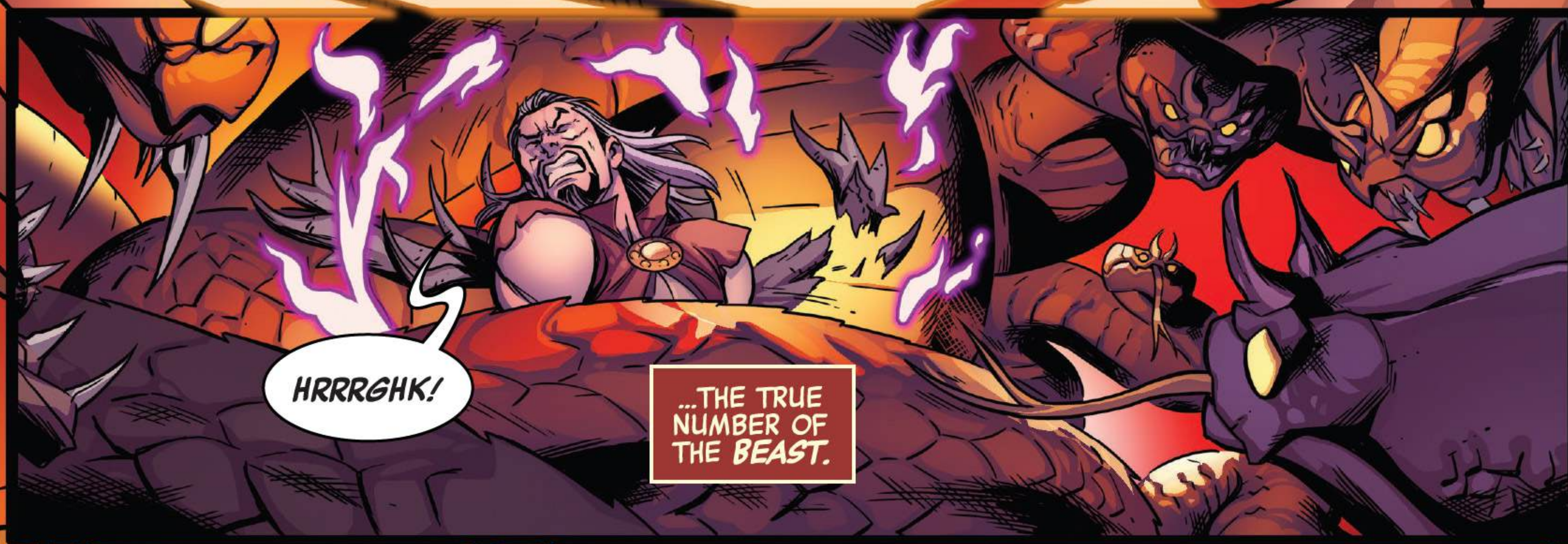
I SEE WORLDS RAVAGED.

THE GREAT HEROES OF PREHISTORY, FROM EARTHS JUST LIKE THIS ONE...

...ALL STRUCK DOWN. ALL BUTCHERED.

AND HERE I STAND ALONE. ON EARTH-616.

INTERESTING NUMBER, THAT. ON SOME WORLDS, THEY CALL IT...



HRRRGHK!

...THE TRUE NUMBER OF THE BEAST.

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR LITTLE GAGGLE OF SUPER-FREAKS? THE GODS AND MONSTERS? THAT PLANET-BURNING FIREBIRD? SHE SEEMED FUN.*

DON'T TELL ME THEY'VE ABANDONED YOU IN YOUR HOUR OF GREATEST NEED?

I'VE NEVER NEEDED ANYONE ELSE TO DEAL WITH YOU, MEPHISTO.

BY ALL THE POWERS OF THE MYSTIC ARTS, YOU SHALL FALL, DEVIL!

*YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED, IF YOU READ THE AVENGERS 1,000,000 B.C. SPECIAL! --TOM

HEH. TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION FROM EARLIER: 312. THAT'S HOW MANY TIMES YOU'VE HUMILIATED ME OVER THE YEARS.

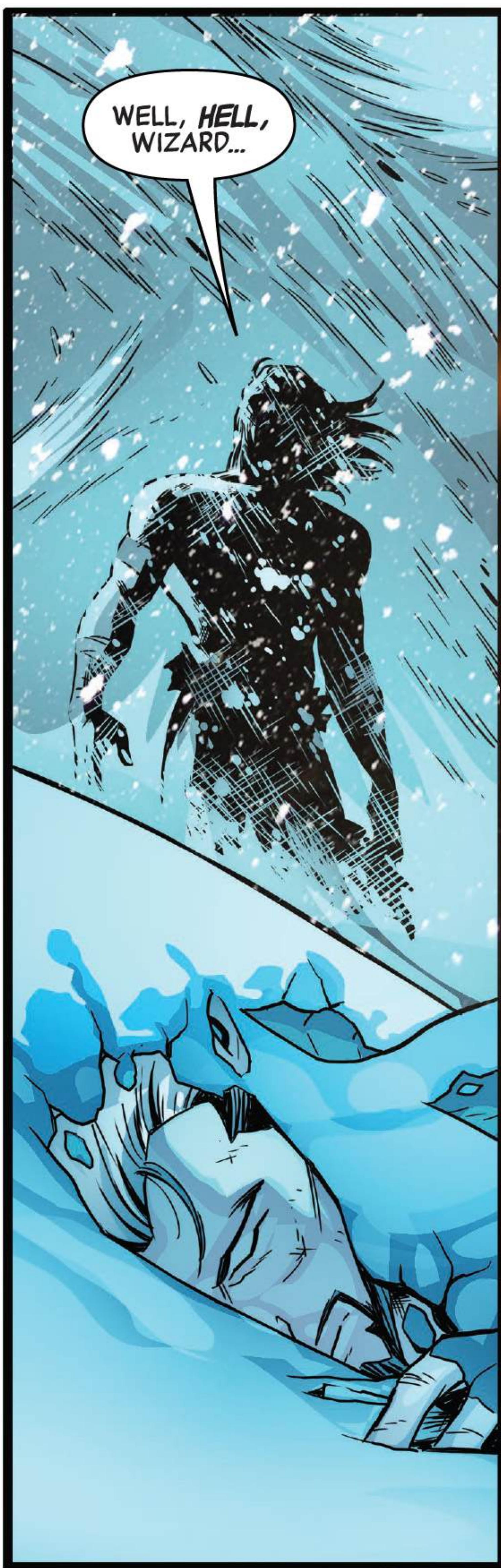
HGGHEERK!

BUT WHO'S KEEPING COUNT?

ALL THOSE EONS, THEY ALL WENT BY SO FAST. I SUPPOSE I STILL HOPED... LIKE SOME SORT OF CAVE-DWELLING FOOL...

...THAT I HAD MORE TIME.

AAAAAGGH!





IT'S ONLY
GETTING **WORSE**
OUT THERE.

I HAD ONE
LAST WEEK...CONVINCED
THE REST OF HIS TRIBE
THAT HE SPOKE FOR THE
GREAT LIGHT IN
THE SKY.

HE TOLD
THEM THAT THE
LIGHT HAD DECIDED
WHO SHOULD EAT
AND WHO SHOULD
STARVE.

THAT IT
WAS THE WILL
OF THE SKY THAT
ALL THEIR CHILDREN
BE TIED TO STAKES
AND LEFT TO ROAST.
ONLY **HE** WAS
ALLOWED TO
BREED.



WHEN I
CAME FOR HIM,
THE OTHER MEN...
THEY ACTUALLY
FOUGHT TO
PROTECT
HIM.

I ENDED
UP...HAVING
TO BURN THEM
ALL.



I USED TO
THINK...GIVEN
ENOUGH **PENANCE**...
THEY WOULD SEE
THE WAY.

THEY WOULD
RISE ABOVE THEIR
NATURES.

BUT NOW,
AFTER SO MANY
RIDES...

...I
DESPAIR
FOR THEM.
I DO.

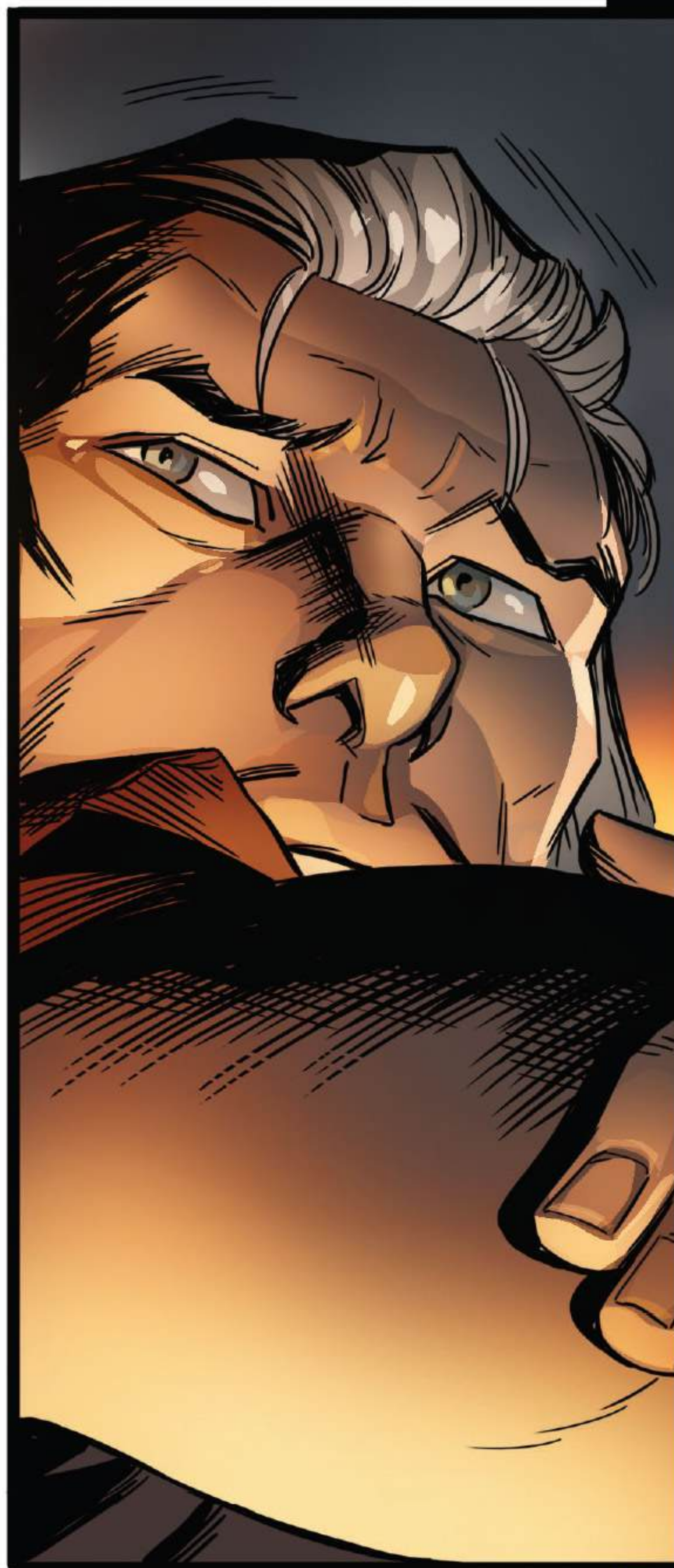


YOU SEE
THE FUTURE,
DO YOU NOT,
WIZARD?

I...HAVE
BEEN KNOWN
TO DO SO.

THEN TELL
ME ONE THING.
WILL IT EVER
END?

WILL...
WHAT...EVER
END...**GHOST
RIDER?**



NO.

NO, IT WILL
MOST ASSUREDLY
NOT.

THE MORE
HUMANKIND GROWS
AND SPREADS...



...THE MORE
NEW WAYS THEY
WILL DEVISE TO SLAY
AND DEFILE ONE
ANOTHER.



DO YOU
HAVE ANY IDEA...
HOW MUCH **TORMENT**
I HAVE TO ENDURE...
TO BE...

...THIS?

I AM SURE
EVEN I CANNOT
IMAGINE. AND I CAN
IMAGINE MORE
THAN MOST.



TELL
ME **WHY** I'M
DOING THIS,
WIZARD.

WHY
I'VE GIVEN
SO MUCH TO FIGHT
A WAR... THAT YOU'RE
TELLING ME WE'LL
NEVER WIN.

WIZARD?

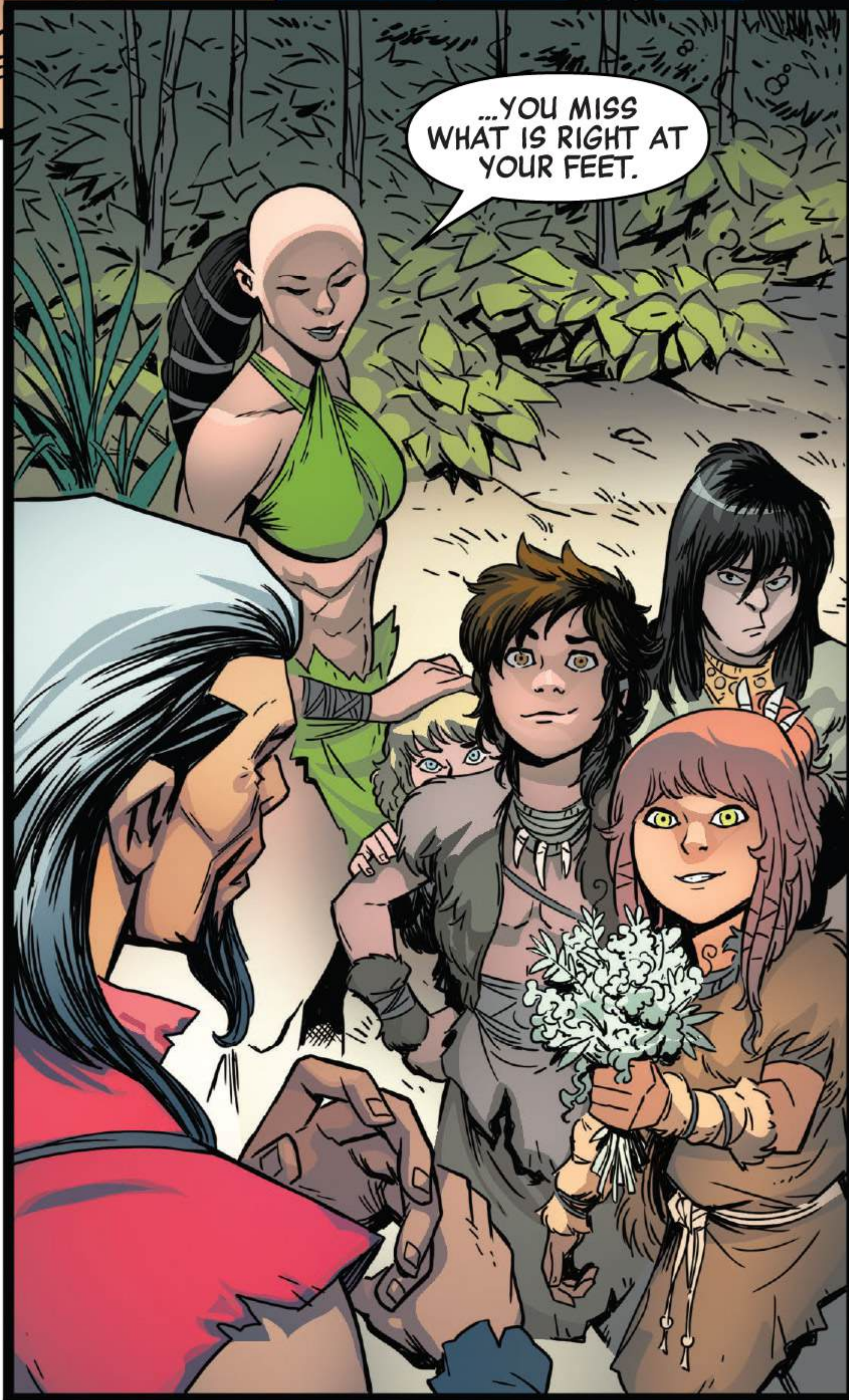


SO,
HOW DID YOU
ANSWER?

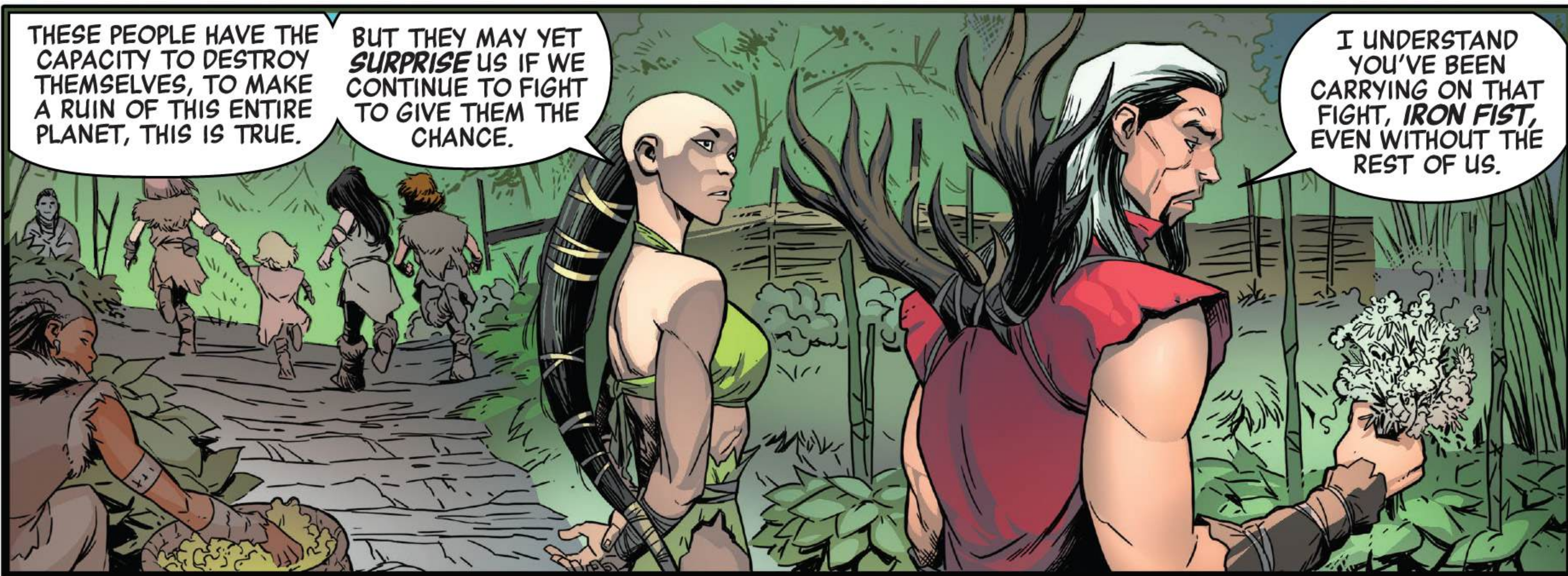


I DID
NOT HAVE
ONE.

PERHAPS
YOUR PROBLEM IS
THAT YOU SEE **TOO
MUCH**, AGAMOTTO. IF
YOU KEEP YOUR EYES
ALWAYS ON THE
HORIZON...



...YOU MISS
WHAT IS RIGHT AT
YOUR FEET.



THESE PEOPLE HAVE THE
CAPACITY TO DESTROY
THEMSELVES, TO MAKE
A RUIN OF THIS ENTIRE
PLANET, THIS IS TRUE.

BUT THEY MAY YET
SURPRISE US IF WE
CONTINUE TO FIGHT
TO GIVE THEM THE
CHANCE.

I UNDERSTAND
YOU'VE BEEN
CARRYING ON THAT
FIGHT, **IRON FIST**,
EVEN WITHOUT THE
REST OF US.



THE DANGERS DID NOT STOP COMING FOR THIS WORLD JUST BECAUSE EARTH'S ALMIGHTIEST HEROES WENT THEIR SEPARATE WAYS.

SO I FOUND **NEW** ALLIES.

HHHRK.

IT'S ALL RIGHT, **MOON KNIGHT**. HE'S A FRIEND.



AREN'T YOU, AGAMOTTO?

YOU'RE RIGHT-- I SEE TOO MUCH. DAMN MY EYES.

AND NOW I'VE SEEN WHAT'S **COMING** FOR US. WE'LL NEED ALL THE HEROES WE CAN FIND.



I'LL BE THERE, WHATEVER THE FIGHT.

I MAY HAVE BEEN BORN IN K'UN-LUN, BUT THE DESTINY OF THE IRON FIST IS BOUND TO THIS WORLD.

THOUGH I CANNOT SPEAK FOR THE REST OF OUR FORMER COMPATRIOTS. YOU'RE GOING TO SEE THEM ALL?

YES. ALL WHOM I CAN FIND.

I'D START WITH THE **BIG ONE** IF I WERE YOU.

AND WHERE MIGHT I FIND HIM?

WHERE ELSE?

"AMONG THE STARS."

WE'VE ALL BEEN FORGED THROUGH *SUFFERING*, THE BEINGS LIKE US.

THE IRON FIST HAS MADE HER PEACE WITH THAT, WITH BEING AN EXILE FROM HER HOME.

FOR OTHERS...THE PAIN IS ALWAYS THERE, TEARING THEM APART.

GRRRROORRGGGGH!!!

I CAN TAKE IT AWAY.

IF YOU'LL HELP ME IN THIS FIGHT...I CAN TAKE AWAY THE MEMORY THAT VEXES YOU. I CAN HELP YOU FORGET... WHAT IT WAS YOU *LOST*.

HHHRK.

NAME...WAS...
BRRKK.

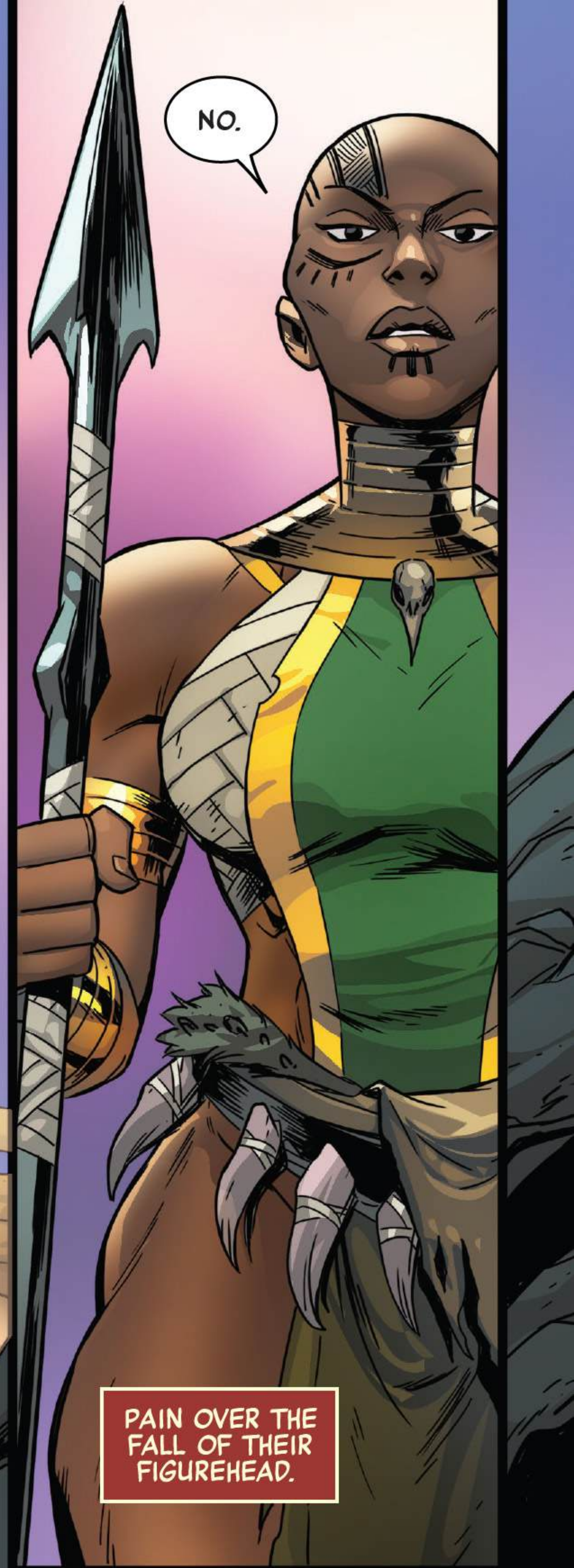
AND I *NO* WANT... LET GO...OF PAIN.

STARBRAND WANT...MAKE *OTHERS* FEEL IT.

YOU... TELL ME *WHO*.



I FEEL THE PAIN
IN THE LAND OF THE
PANTHERS AS WELL.



NO.

PAIN OVER THE
FALL OF THEIR
FIGUREHEAD.



A PAIN SO GREAT...
I FEAR THEIR
DOORS WILL REMAIN
BARRED TO THE REST
OF THE WORLD...



...FOR A *VERY*
LONG TIME.

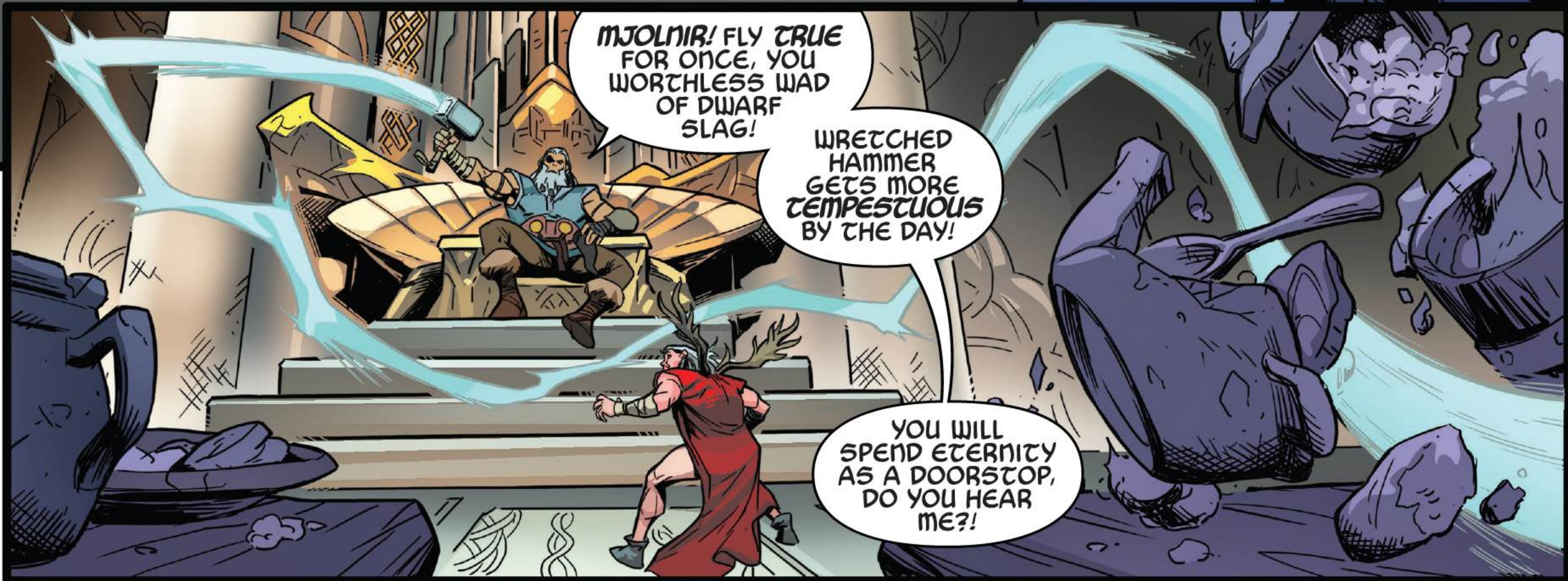


AYE,
WIZARD! BY ALL
THE GODS...



...I CARE
NOT WHO IT IS
WE FIGHT! JUST GET
ME OUT OF THIS
GODFORSAKEN
REALM!

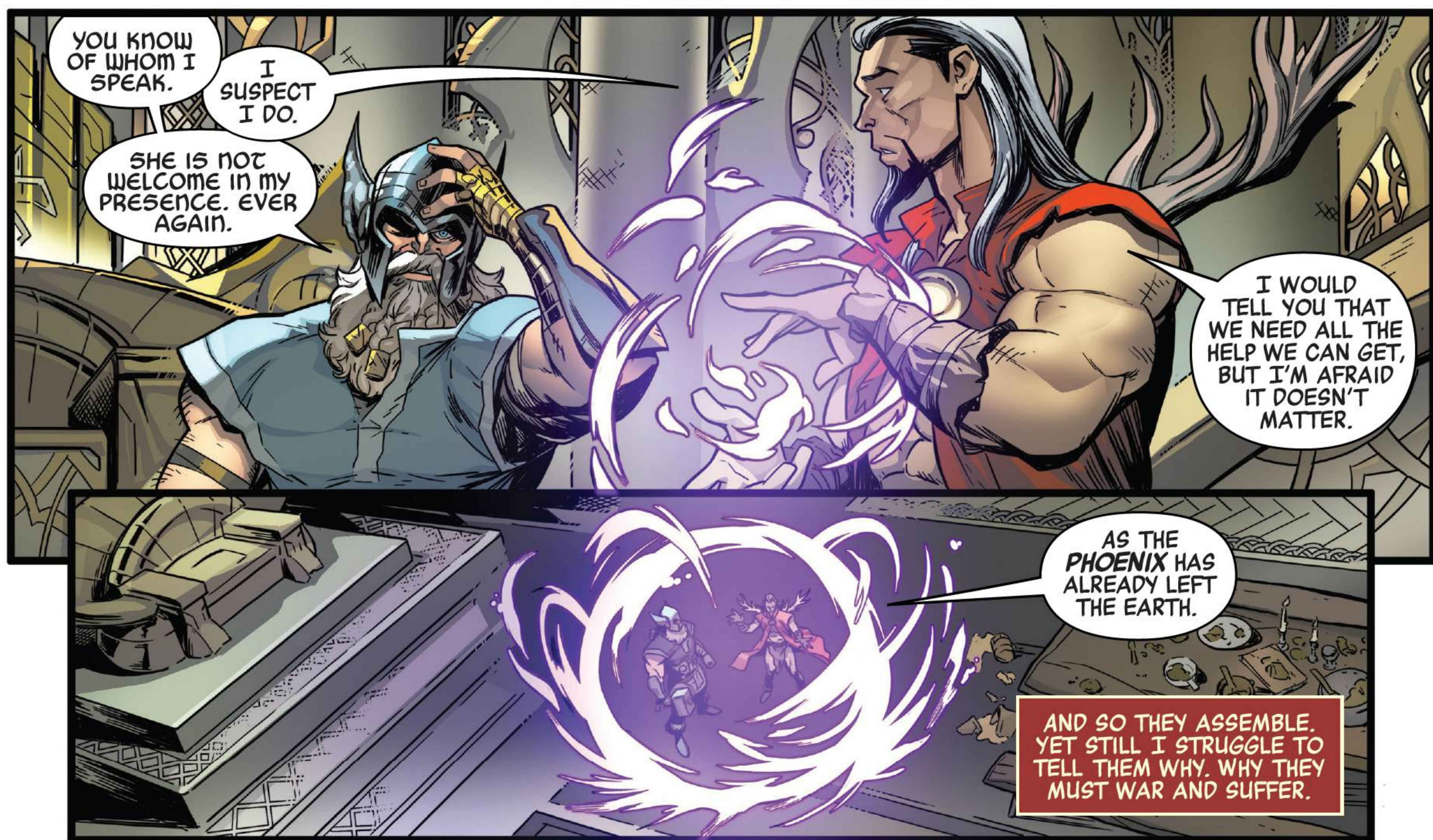
'TIS *THUNDER*
DAY AND NIGHT
SINCE THAT BLASTED
COLICKY *WHELP*
WAS BORN!



MJOLNIR! FLY TRUE
FOR ONCE, YOU
WORTHLESS WAD
OF DWARF
SLAG!

WRETCHED
HAMMER
GETS MORE
TEMPESTUOUS
BY THE DAY!

YOU WILL
SPEND ETERNITY
AS A DOORSTOP,
DO YOU HEAR
ME?!





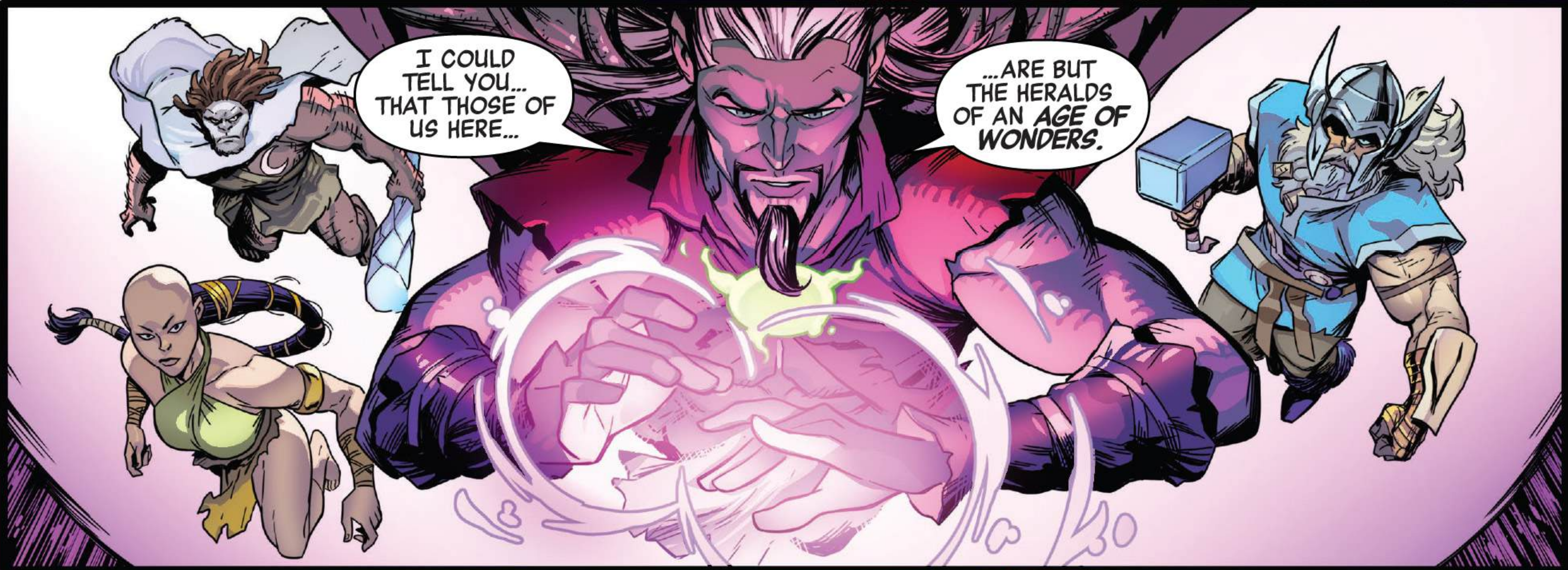
WHY SOME OF THEM...MAY VERY WELL DIE.

THE GHOST RIDER ASKED ME A QUESTION.

WHY DO WE BOTHER TO DO WHAT WE DO?



WHEN NO MATTER HOW WE FIGHT, THE WAR WILL NOT END.



I COULD TELL YOU... THAT THOSE OF US HERE...

...ARE BUT THE HERALDS OF AN AGE OF WONDERS.



I COULD TELL YOU THOSE THINGS, BUT THEN I FIGURED...

BY THE BLIZZARDS OF HEL...



...IT WOULD
BE EASIER IF
I **SHOWED**
YOU.

**TO BE CONTINUED IN
AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!**



CARMEN CARNERO & MATTHEW WILSON
#57 HELLFIRE GALA VARIANT



HUMBERTO RAMOS & EDGAR DELGADO
#61 MIRACLEMAN VARIANT



MIKE McKONE & FRANK MARTIN
#62 X-TREME MARVEL VARIANT

“This creative team has been building this story for nearly five years, and I’m still psyched to read each issue.” — Major Spoilers

THE AVENGERS ARE LOST IN TIME!

IF EARTH’S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE ANY HOPE of stopping Mephisto’s grand plan, they’ll need help from legendary champions from different eras whose stories have never been told — until now! Legends like the mystical man of war, Sgt. Szardos, Soldier Supreme of World War II; the fabled Ghost Ronin of Japan’s Edo Period, who walks by night and wields a blade forged by hellfire; and Reno Phoenix and the Starbrand Kid in the Old West! Is that enough to force a showdown with the forces of Mephisto? Or will the Avengers be trapped in the past forever? Featuring the long-awaited return of the Avenging archer, Hawkeye!



COLLECTING **AVENGERS (2018) #57-62** — BY JASON AARON, MARK RUSSELL, JAVIER GARRÓN, GREG LAND, IVAN FIORELLI, JAY LEISTEN AND DAVID CURIEL.

T+

MARVEL

